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PREMIERE: SNORKELING TOURBOOK

skin diver

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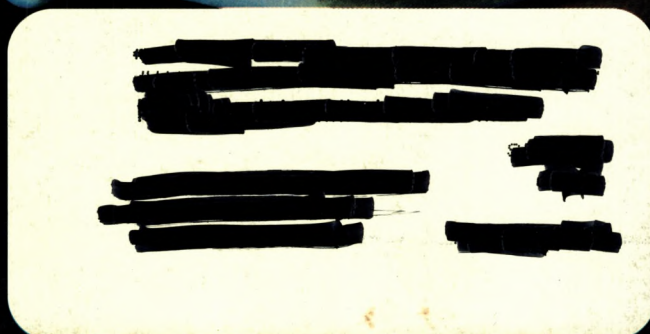
LIVE-ABOARD REPORTS:

Sun Dancer in Palau
Lammer Law in the Galapagos
Truk Aggressor II in Micronesia

SHARKS YOU SHOULD KNOW:

Port Jackson Shark

I LEARNED... Elusive Fish School
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First Class Citizens

BY BILL GLEASON



A while back, I dedicated this monthly column to the topic of snorkeling, entitling it "Second Class Citizens." Many snorkelers who have tried to get first class service at dive resorts immediately agreed with the points the column made. Numerous readers wrote to tell of the less than wonderful snorkeling experiences encountered at resorts that have pretty good track records for delivering quality diving experiences.

Nearly all the snorkelers who wrote had "enjoyed" the diesel fumes coming over the transom of the boat, since that's where they were told to sit/stand. They waited politely as the divers got suited up, staying out of the way so the divers could get in the water first. The snorkelers were particularly "appreciative" about being included in the final head count after the dive, since that was the sum total of all the attention they received while trying to snorkel from a dive boat!

The problem, of course, was easy to spot. They were "just" snorkelers. Anyone who's strapped on a tank a few times will almost always add the word "just" before "snorkelers." It's part of snorkelers' second class citizenship. After all, if they want respect, why don't they strap on a 40 pound tank with the rest of us? But statistics, good business sense and plain old good manners fly in the face of treating snorkelers as second class citizens.

Snorkelers outnumber divers by almost four to one. Every year, millions of people snorkel with no intention of getting certified. Every year, many of those millions have wonderful snorkeling experiences—maybe even as good or better than our last dive. (The first time I snorkeled in clear water was something I will never forget!) In survey after survey, these people report that snorkeling was a highpoint of their vacations. In survey after survey, the snorkelers say they want to go again and more frequently. They want to buy airplane tickets, hotel rooms and snorkel trips. There should be some good business folks who grasp the inherent potential here.

Most important of all, however, snorkelers are our kindred souls, fellow ocean and water explorers. It has long been an important part of diving to help other divers. Thousands of trips on boats over the years have taught me how friendly and helpful divers can be. The second class citizenship we often unknowingly bestow on snorkelers (even our own friends and family) doesn't seem consistent with the spirit of divers. But, that's starting to change, right now.

The island of Bonaire, long a pioneer in both innovative diving practices and

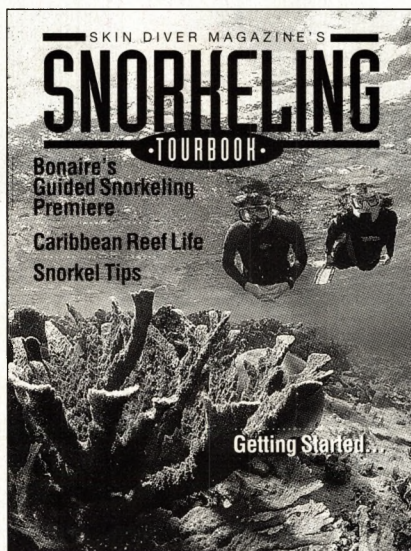
slide show. There are no tests, no studying. But, you can ask your guide everything you ever wanted to know about the coral reefs because the same person who gives you the half hour fun lecture also goes with you on your snorkeling boat. You even get to avoid the diesel fumes with this program!

It seems the lights are finally going on in the diving community, illuminating a new world in which snorkelers get first class treatment. That is, indeed, good news and similar programs are underway in both The Bahamas and the Bay Islands of Honduras. This first class citizenship thing just might catch on.

For many years, the SKIN DIVER staff has fielded numerous calls every month from frustrated snorkelers looking for information geared to them, not divers. Frustrated by a lack of good information elsewhere, they apologize for calling a dive magazine and fire away with their questions. Beginning this issue, we think it's time we treated them to our version of their own dedicated boat, guide and special type of snorkel briefing.

We are delighted to introduce the first issue of SDM's Snorkeling Tourbook, dedicated specifically to the needs of snorkelers. This mini magazine will appear in every issue and contain information on snorkeling techniques, equipment, resorts, destinations, programs and marine life. Divers are welcome to read it or pass it along to the snorkelers among family members, friends and fellow vacationers. You might even want to join them on a guided snorkel tour. You may find out there is quite a lot to see in the top 20 feet of water that you've been missing on deeper dives.

Kudos to the resorts and island of Bonaire for leading the way with this very special program. Families with kids, seniors, baby boomers and kids by themselves will benefit from the new programs. After all, they're open to anyone who can float or sink (they'll give you a vest if you're a sinker). And take a look around that snorkeling classroom while everyone's in there having fun and learning about the ocean. You just might feel like sneaking in the back door and enjoying the shows. You'll be welcome, but don't let them know you are "just a diver." 🐠



reef conservation, is launching the most ambitious snorkeling program ever unveiled. More than 12 different operators on the island have gotten together and helped create a first class program for first class citizens. They call it Bonaire Guided Snorkeling and it promises and delivers a unique experience for snorkelers of all ages. In order to help snorkelers learn more about the underwater world (specifically the area from shore to a maximum of 20 feet), they begin each Bonaire Guided Snorkeling tour (morning, afternoon and some nights) in a classroom instead of a boat. In every class, you learn about coral reef ecology, basic through advanced fish-watching, corals, night snorkeling and there's even a snorkel trip to the mangroves! Every trip is complete with a

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Adventure diving the unforgettable
Galapagos

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COZUMEL

1996 Dive
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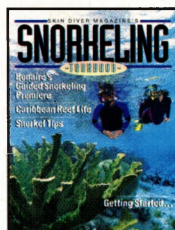
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SNORKELING TOURBOOK

The premiere of
SKIN DIVER's
mini magazine

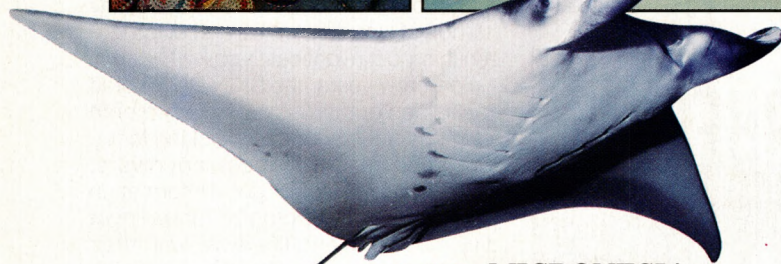
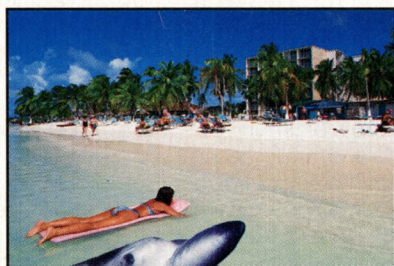
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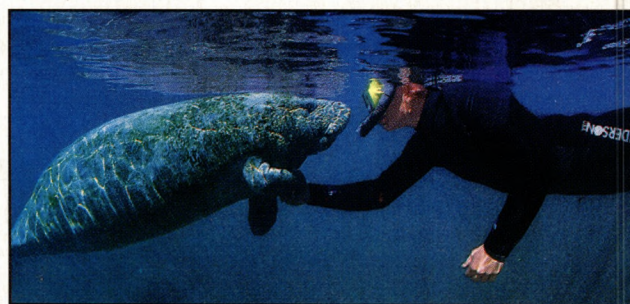
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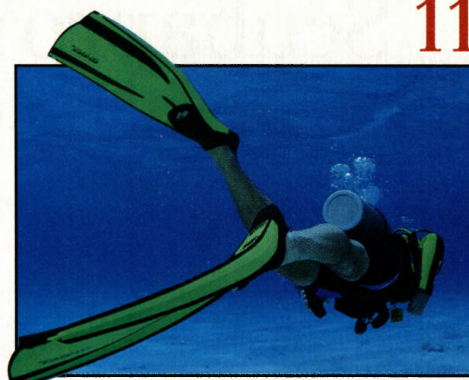
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The Mares story of efficiency, proper fin selection and diving performance

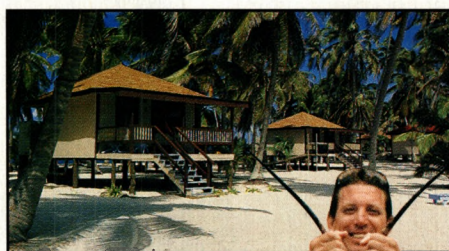
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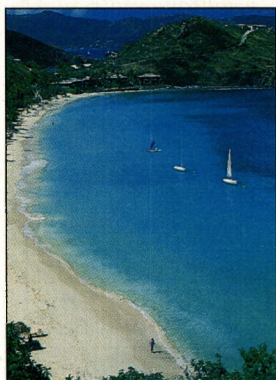
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ABOUT THE COVER: The Gray Angelfish (*Pomacanthus arcuatus*) is one of the most common yet elegantly beautiful reef fish in the Caribbean. Residing in depths of 10 to 60 feet, throughout Florida, the northern Caribbean and The Bahamas, the Gray Angelfish can be observed and enjoyed by snorkelers as well as divers. Photo/Geri Murphy.

Scubapro's Air Integrated EDI

Vital Information at a Glance

BY TY SAWYER
PHOTOGRAPHY BY BONNIE J. CARDONE

Every time we enter the water and safely return to the surface we have survived an excursion into a hostile, alien environment. Scubapro has improved our odds with the easy to use and extremely clear EDI—Essential Divers Information—dive computer. The display is intuitive, contains nothing superfluous and the package is compact and rugged. Divers needs aren't complicated so the tools we use should reflect our simple requirements. The EDI (pronounced "eddie") does an extraordinary job of hiding the complexities behind our simple need for air and some water to breathe it in.

TOP PRIORITY INFORMATION

Our equipment is bringing us closer and closer to true, unimpeded and safer underwater enjoyment. In today's information overloaded environment, it's nice to see a lean and honed piece of equipment, meant to enhance our safety and enjoyment not distract us with all the clever things it can do.

The EDI has a compact and sleek console that replaces every instrument except your compass. Using an ingeniously clear and intuitive digital display, five vital statistics are presented. Depth and tank pressure are top priorities so they are bigger and bolder, with current depth in the center of the window (maximum dive depth is displayed smaller, slightly to the right and up) and tank pressure in the bottom right. Dive time is found in the upper right corner and no decompression time in the lower left, conveniently near the remaining tank pres-

sure. Unless you enter the decompression mode, the upper left of the display remains dark and free from distraction. If you do enter a decompression profile, total ascent time and maximum depth will begin flashing. If your ascent rate is too fast (the EDI allows you to ascend faster from deeper depths but slower from shallower depths), a warning arrow will appear to the right of the current depth; if your tank pressure falls below 725 psi, the tank pressure display will flash as a warning. As long as you can find your way back to the boat this is all the essential information you'll need while submerged and all you'll get. It's perfectly and brilliantly simple.

Once back on the boat, towel off, sit



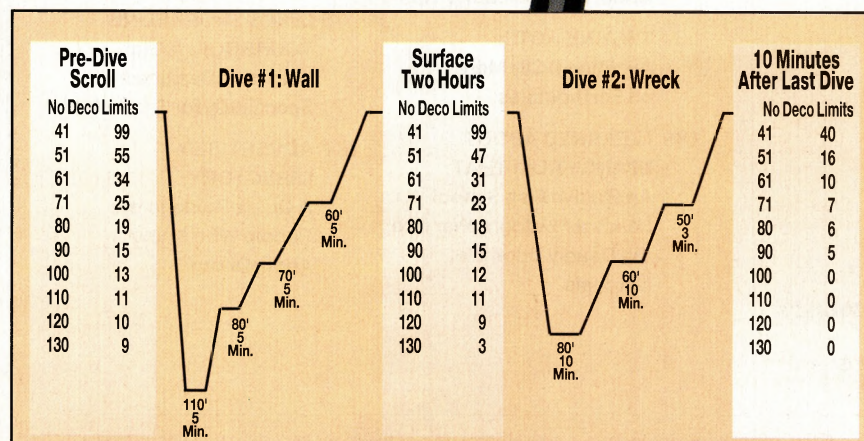
Left and above: The Scubapro EDI's display is cleverly intuitive, contains nothing superfluous and the compact, sleek profile is unobtrusive in the water.

back and enjoy a little rest. The EDI will keep track of your repetitive dive information—surface interval, residual saturation and desaturation of body tissue—and automatically compute remaining no decompression time. When you hit the water after an appropriate surface interval, the EDI makes all the adjustments necessary and your dive time will reflect your repetitive dive status. For your safety, the EDI will remain in this state—by displaying a REP symbol in the lower left corner—as long as it considers you saturated (see Dr. Hahn's Algorithm later in this article).

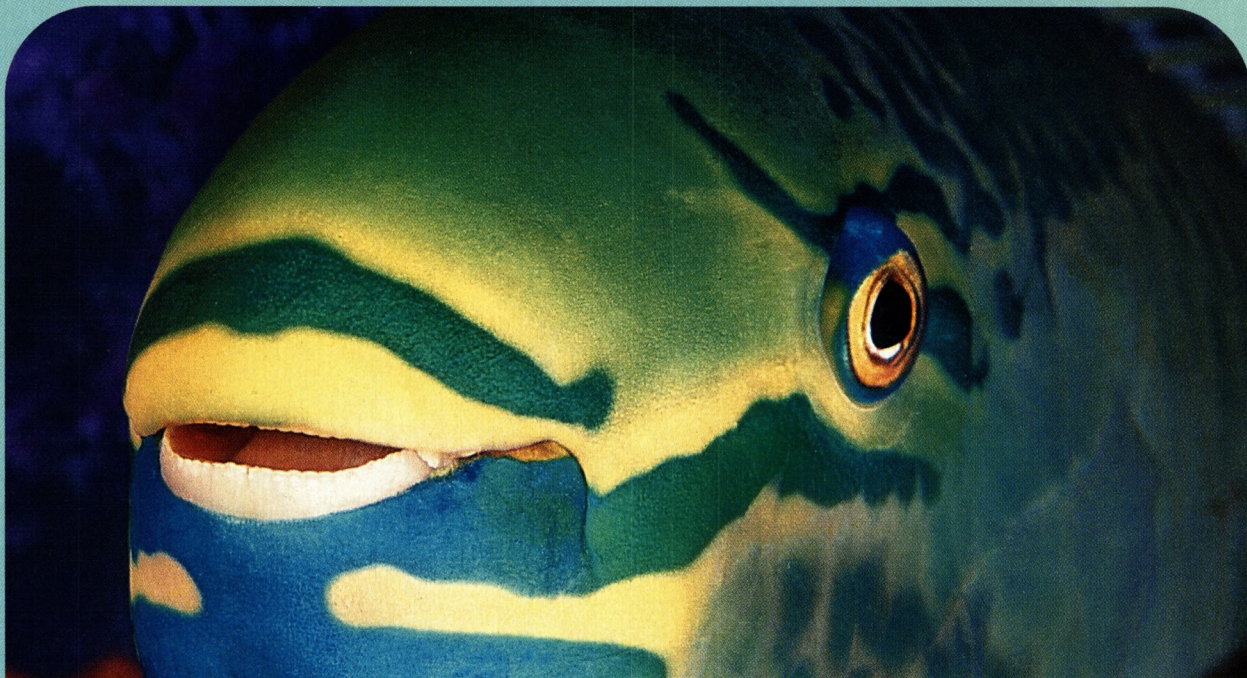
With the EDI in the repetitive dive status, you can even check out your remaining no deco time at various depths (41 to 149 feet) using the surface mode scroll. This allows you to plan your repetitive dives safely and wisely, based on your current theoretical saturation level.

For logbook purposes, the EDI retains the duration, depth, repetitive dive infor-

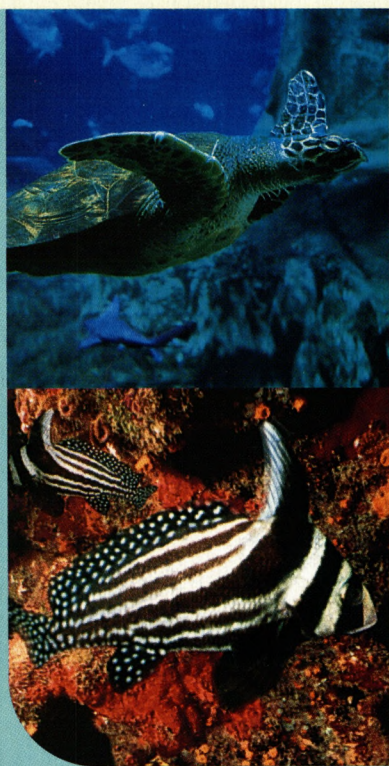
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Above: The EDI factors in your dive profiles and calculates new no decompression limits. The limits shown are scrolled before diving, before dive #1 and after dive #2.



ANY FISH
WHO'S ANYBODY
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To find out how close and easy a great dive vacation can be, call your travel agent or 1-800-372-U.S.V.I.; or contact <http://www.usvi.net/> for Internet access.

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1996 Underwater Cleanup

September 21

Sponsor a Cleanup Right in Your Own Diving Backyard!

TEXT AND PHOTOGRAPHY
BY BILL GLEASON

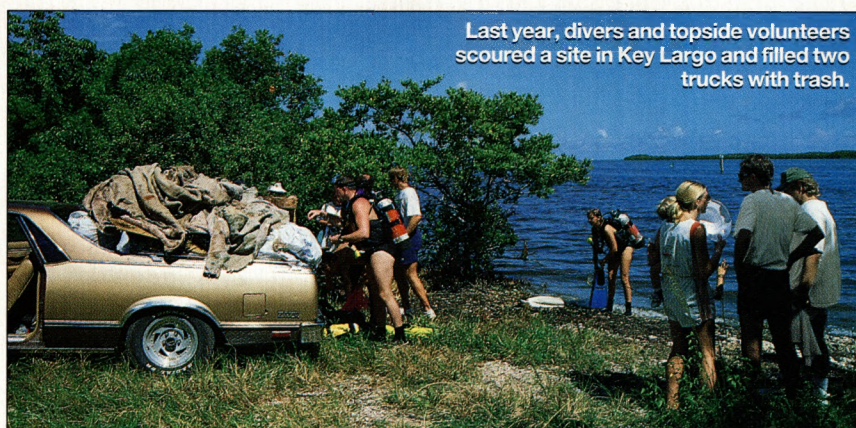
The largest annual event in diving is not the Nikonos Shootout, Cayman Madness or any local diving show or event. By final tally in 1995, the largest participatory event in the diving world is the now annual Underwater Cleanup! More than 12,000 divers participated in events held in 26 states and 26 countries around the world last September. And, the divers were counted at these events. The real figure for participation is probably closer to 20,000—an unbelievable number in our rather small diving world.

All of these events had several things in common:

- All participants left the underwater world that day a cleaner and environ-



Trash gathering is more than an environmental imperative—buddy teams can make it a fun, challenging experience as well.



Last year, divers and topside volunteers scoured a site in Key Largo and filled two trucks with trash.

mentally safer place.

- By participating, we helped get the word out in both the local and national press that divers are concerned citizens who are willing to do something about a major problem facing everyone; marine pollution and basic water quality!

- Often working in conjunction with

topside beach cleanups, we discovered the entire family can pitch in and help.

- And, being divers, we figured out how to make even picking up trash fun! There were parties, socials and just good old and new friends getting together for a great reason!

While sponsoring companies such as

PADI, the Center for Marine Conservation (CMC) and DEMA/ Ocean Futures deserve a lot of the credit for getting the ball rolling, the real congratulations go to the local Trash Captains; the dedicated volunteers who coordinated thousands of little (some not so little, as when more than 400 divers turned out for one in Southern California) local U/W Cleanups. In 1996, this same coalition of companies and volunteers is looking to expand on the tremendous success of 1995. This means we need more Trash Captains than ever before.

It's pretty easy to run a local event, as long as you're willing to put in some time and effort. Here's how to get involved as a 1996 Trash Captain:

1. You can be a dive store, company, instructor, divemaster, diver or concerned citizen of any age, preferably with at least a couple of diving friends.

2. You need to select a place to hold your U/W cleanup. Typically, this is not a dive site, since divers regularly police

5. Once you follow the above steps, we'll step in and give you a hand. Our September issue (which comes to the newsstands and subscribers a full


In the sidebar accompanying this article, we supply you with a countdown of participating states and countries. Give



Bonaire's enthusiastic cleanup participants show off their collection of trash.

it a quick check to make sure your state or country isn't left out. And, remember, we will be splitting the states into local

What was doubly interesting was the question posed to me by a six year old young lady. As we were bagging trash I had just removed from a stand of mangroves, she looked at me with a mixture of innocence and bewilderment. "Why do people throw this stuff here, anyway?" she asked.

The answer(s) to that very good question is the reason every diver should consider being a Trash Captain or participating in this year's U/W Cleanup. 

[illegible]

The Port Jackson

(*Heterodontus portusjacksoni*)

BY BONNIE J. CARDONE

You won't have trouble identifying the Port Jackson Shark, it's unmistakable. A member of the Bullhead Shark family, *Heterodontus portusjacksoni* has a distinctive shape and distinctive markings. Also, it is found only off the southeastern, southern and southwestern coasts of Australia, including Tasmania.

The Port Jackson Shark is notable for its pig-like snout, large nostrils and ridges above the eyes. Each of the two dorsal fins has a sharp spine at its base. This shark also has a broad black band running over the top of the head, through the eyes and down the cheeks as well as body markings that look like a harness. This black bar runs over the top of the body in front of the first dorsal fin, then splits in two. One bar continues down to the pectoral fin, the other to the pelvic fin.

The Port Jackson Shark is found in depths ranging from 20 feet on down to 600. It can grow to lengths of five and a half feet but most adults are usually about four and a half feet long. The teeth are designed for grinding and the shark's favorite food is sea urchins, mollusks, fish and crustaceans, for which it forages on the bottom. The shark is nocturnal, lying in crevices during the day, eating and mating at night.

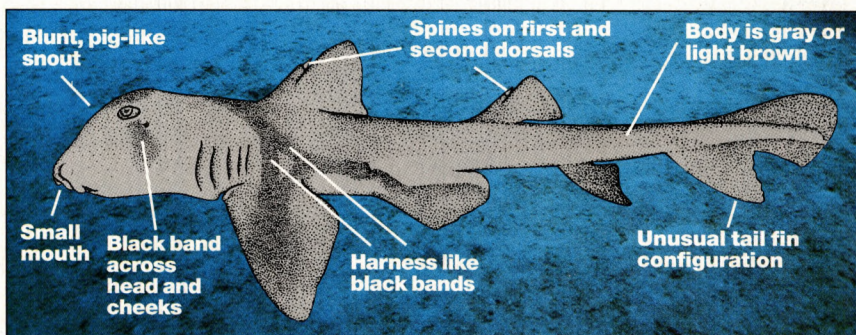
All of the Bullhead Sharks have unusual eggcases. The Port Jackson Shark lays a dark green, screw shaped eggcase. The female is very particular about where she lays her eggs, often returning to the same place year after year. Several females may share an egg-laying area. The female is also very particular about the placement of an eggcase, picking it up with her mouth and wedging it in a crevice or other protected space. The shape and whorls of the eggcase prevent it from being removed. A female will lay 10 to 16 eggcases over a period of several weeks. The embryos develop in the eggcase for 9 to 12 months before hatching.

Male and female juveniles live together in bays and estuaries for several years. Just before sexual maturity, the males and females form separate groups, probably moving to the outer edges of the continental shelf. After several years, they join adult populations.

The Bullhead Shark family, order



photo/Marty Snyderman



Heterodontiformes, consists of only one genus with eight species. We featured another Bullhead, a Horn Shark (*Heterodontus francisci*) found off California, as one of the five sharks least dangerous to divers in this column in April 1995.

Besides their distinctive shapes and fin spines, Bullheads have anal fins, nasal flaps, five gill slits and small spiracles behind and below the eyes. The skin is very rough. According to *Sharks in Question: The Smithsonian Answer Book*, "Shark skin is unique: tough, abrasive, and composed of tiny, hard, implanted tooth-like scales called...denticles." Similar to teeth in structure, denticles have a hard outer layer of enamel. Macro photographs of a shark's skin underwater are impossible with most species but, since Bullheads are sluggish bottom dwellers, this is

The bottom dwelling Port Jackson Shark is found in temperate and subtropical waters off Australia. Usually about four and a half feet long, its markings and fin spines make this shark easy to identify.

much easier. Approach slowly and carefully, don't startle or harass the shark. Your macro photographs will clearly show the tiny, triangular denticles.

Bullhead Sharks adapt well to captivity, living in aquariums for years. They will grow to adulthood, mate and even lay eggs.

Because it is a small, slow moving shark, with a small mouth and teeth adapted for grinding, not biting, the Port Jackson Shark is considered harmless to people. However, scuba divers should not harass it because "it can deliver a painful nip when provoked" (FAO *Species Catalogue*). 🦈

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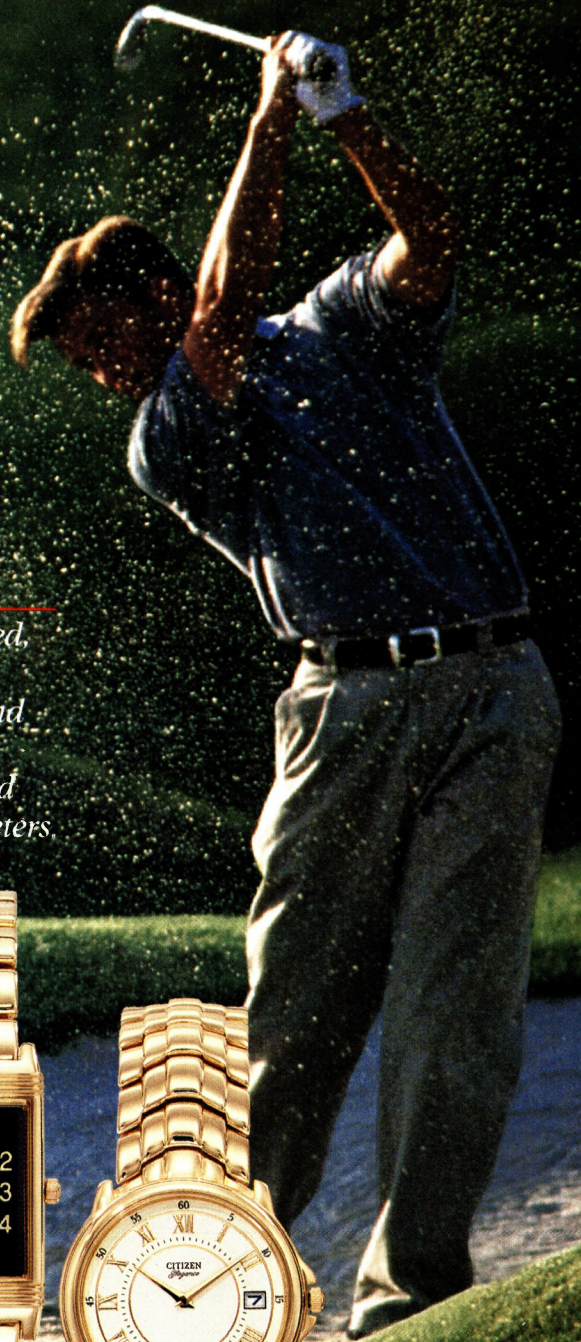
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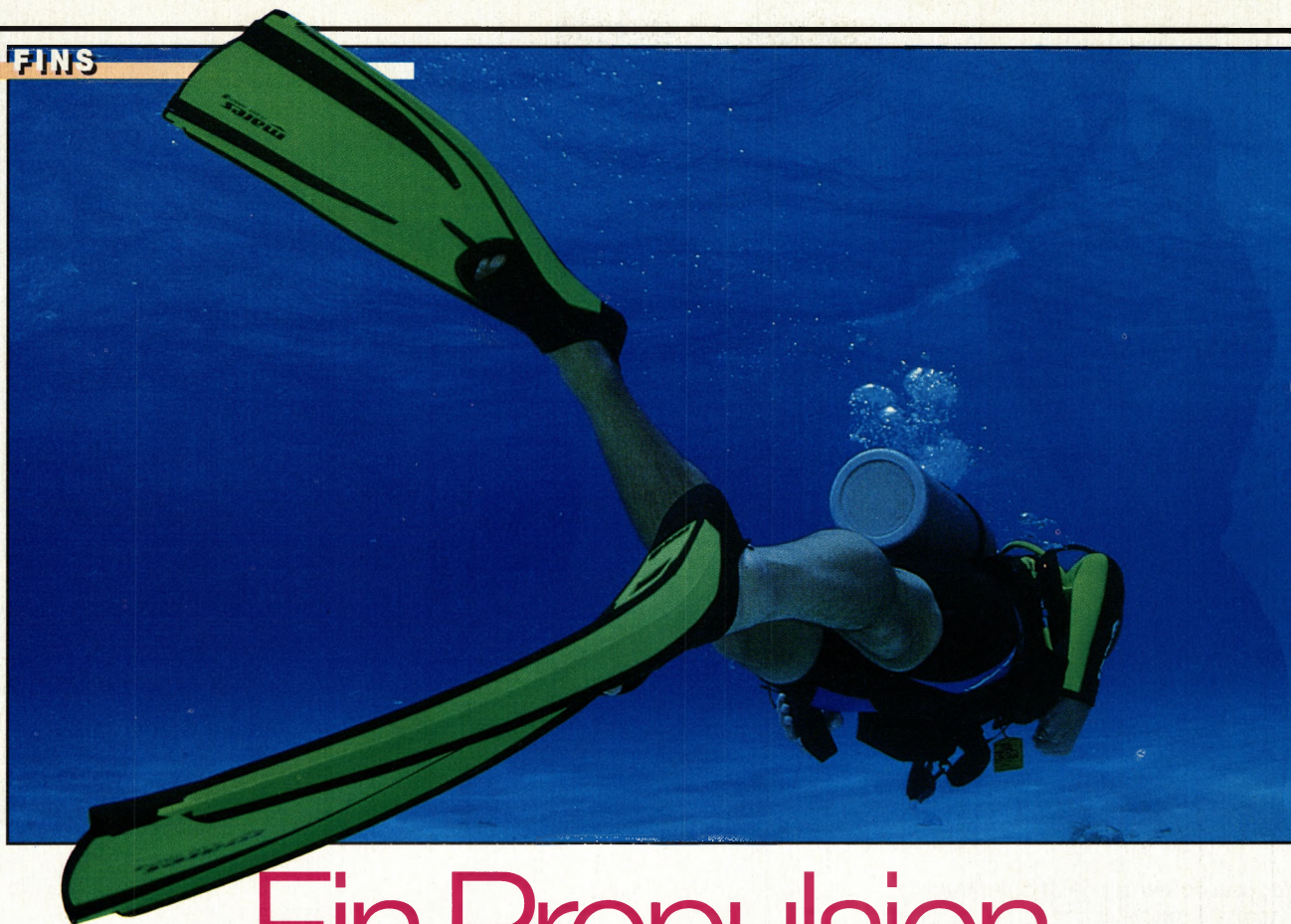
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Fin Propulsion

The Mares Story of Efficiency, Proper Fin Selection and Diving Performance

BY BILL GLEASON

PHOTOGRAPHY BY WALT STEARNS

Just how do you kick properly underwater? The usual answer to this question, "Keep your legs straight and use a slow, strong kick," may be misleading, as it assumes everyone has the same equipment, dives in the same conditions, uses the same fins and shares a common aerobic conditioning. Since none of the statements above is true, just what are the components of proper underwater propulsion? What's the easiest way to get from point A to point B, what's the best equipment and what's the most efficient way to use it?

Luckily, there's a diving company headquartered in Rapallo, Italy that has been studying the subject of proper fin propulsion for nearly 30 years. In the course of researching and testing fin propulsion over the last few decades, Mares has also turned the dive industry upside down a couple of times when its

research and development discovered new ways to increase fin performance.

In 1976, Mares introduced the Power Plana, revolutionizing fin technology and laying the groundwork for today's high performance fins. Mares also introduced the Adjustable Swivel Buckle Strap (1985), created the first fins with specially constructed grooves to improve efficiency (Channel Thrust Power System, 1985) and continues to modify and innovate fin technology through its brand new, market leading (1996) Adjustable Binding System (ABS).

TEMPERATURE: A DECIDING FACTOR

One of the first factors determining fin selection and performance is water temperature. Water colder than 70°F dictates the use of open heel fins so there's room for neoprene boots. Water

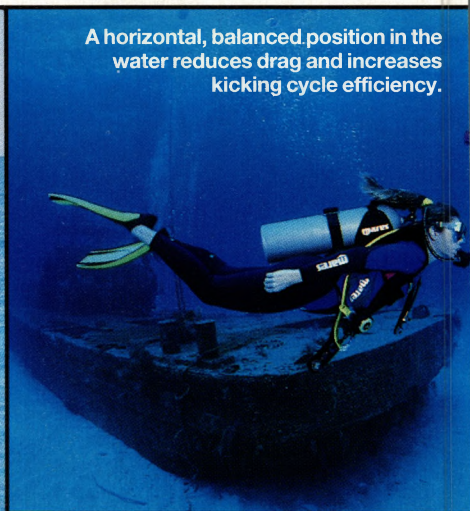
warmer than 70°F, particularly the high 70s and low 80s, typically found in most tropical resort settings, allows use of a full footpocket fin. Yet, it's typical to see divers dragging their cold water fins to warm water. While having one pair of fins may be economical, you sacrifice quite a bit of performance by wearing warm or cold water fins in their reverse environments. Consider:

1. You don't need neoprene boots for warmth in warm water. Wearing them means your feet have extra buoyancy and may tend to make your legs float. You counter this by kicking more, using more energy or wearing more weight. None of this makes you more efficient, it does just the opposite.

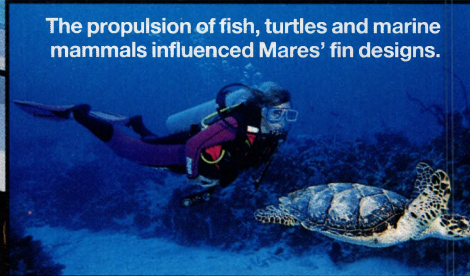
2. The larger footpockets on open heel fins create more drag than streamlined full footpocket fins. It may not seem like much but it's significant. The more



Dive conditions and activities, such as fishwatching and photography, can determine a diver's choice of fins.



A horizontal, balanced position in the water reduces drag and increases kicking cycle efficiency.



The propulsion of fish, turtles and marine mammals influenced Mares' fin designs.

rugged construction of open heel fins means you have more fin to push around. This doesn't mean more propulsion, it means more resistance.

CONDITIONING

After temperature, your aerobic and anaerobic conditioning also affect your fin choice. Even a well-conditioned swimmer who doesn't work out regularly wearing fins can end up with muscle cramps if the fins are too large (in terms of water resistance, not necessarily overall size) or too stiff. The best conditioning for swimming with fins underwater is, you may have guessed, swimming with fins underwater!

Surface swimming (usually requiring a shallower motion than underwater swimming) is its own skill. This is where the traditional advice may be misleading. In order to move quickly and efficiently through the water, you need to increase the rate of your kick. Large bladed fins increase power with each individual thrust but leg muscles may groan at the effort! So, if speed and efficiency are your goals, you have to incorporate your rate of kicking into the equation. Having larger fins, all other factors being equal, will provide more power. Being able to sustain kicking with large fins may be more than most divers can handle. Just watch how a fish accelerates. It moves its tail faster but no adjustment is made in overall fin size.

Mares Fins Performance Features

	Quattro	Avanti	Plana SL	Avanti L	Avanti HP
Recommended for freediving				Yes	
Recommended for snorkeling				Yes	Yes
Recommended for scuba diving	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Performance level (1-10)	10+	9	8	9	8
70°F or warmer	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
70°F or colder	Yes	Yes	Yes		
2 channel membrane		Yes		Yes	Yes
4 channel membrane	Yes				
Direct Line Thrust technology	Yes	Yes		Yes	Yes

So it is with divers. If you only kick your fins slowly and deeply, you may be sacrificing thrust for power—not to mention attaining sore quads and ankles! In warm water, you can generally choose thrust over power. Smaller bladed fins (and full footpocket fins) are the logical choice to both maintain you in the water with a slow kick and deliver optimal speed by allowing you to increase the rate of your kick without excessive demands on your leg muscles.

DIVING CONDITIONS

There may be cold water situations, particularly when you encounter current, where smaller fins can't deliver the pow-

er (at a slow kick) larger fins can. In this case, power is more important than thrust; larger fins are the ticket! Coupled with neoprene suits, larger BCs and even multiple tank systems, cold water divers need to deliver more power per slow kick than their warm water friends. This is where you choose the optimal blade size and stiffness your legs can reasonably handle with a slow kick.

EFFICIENCY

True fin performance is measured by efficiency, by comparing how much power and thrust are delivered with equal effort. Here, the design of the Mares fin line truly leads the diving



Fin selection should be determined by physique, diving style and activities.

Mares' range of styles (far left) include full foot fins (left) for warm water diving and open heel fins with quick-release buckles (this photo).

Comparison of Mares Fins

	Quattro	Avanti L	Avanti	Avanti HP	Plana SL
Type	Open heel	Full foot	Open heel	Full foot	Open heel
Material	Thermo-plastic rubber/Tecralene	Thermo-plastic rubber/Tecralene	Thermo-plastic rubber/Tecralene	Thermo-plastic rubber/Tecralene	Thermo-plastic rubber/Tecralene
Sizes	Small, regular extra-large	38/39, 40/41, 42/43, 44/45	Small, regular extra-large	36/37, 38/39, 40/41, 42/43 44/45, 46/47	Small, regular
Color	Yellow, blue, lime, black, metal, red	Lime, black metal	Yellow, blue, lime, flamingo, black metal, pink	Yellow, blue, lime, flamingo, black metal, pink	Yellow, blue, lime, flamingo, black metal, pink
Retail price	\$144.95	\$124.95	\$114.95	\$69.95	\$59.95

world. The Direct Line Thrust design of the fins, expressed in their long, graceful lines, forces more water behind the diver rather than to the side. This translates to optimal performance with a slow kick. The channels built into the fins allow you to increase the thrust by increasing your rate of kicking, while still channeling the force of the kick behind you. When you increase the speed of the kick, you also increase thrust and power—the only fins in the world designed to do both. The channels in the fin flare out in proportion to increased speed and power. You may never have to use the maximum

thrust/power the fins can provide but the efficiency of the design allows you the best of both worlds. There is efficient power at relatively low rates of kicking speed (as would be normal for slow reef cruising); increased speed and thrust are attained by adjusting your rate of kicking. Don't try to go faster by increasing your rate of deep kicks. Your muscles (unless superbly and specifically conditioned) can't take that kind of abuse for long. Instead, increase the rate of kicking, using a shallower kick, and you'll find yourself flying along comfortably. The rib edges of Mares fins are

also specially designed to increase water channeling at any kick rate, an important factor in overall diver performance and efficiency.

ADJUSTABLE BINDING SYSTEM

Bells and whistles are always nice, particularly when they do exactly what they are supposed to, and that's the case with the Mares designed ABS. At the beginning of the dive, simply slide the open heel fin on; you can adjust the strap tension with one hand (leaving your other hand free to balance yourself). At the end of a dive, simply release one side of the finstrap and your foot is free. Hand up your fins and it's time to start swapping diving tales!

CONCLUSION

Many factors go into proper fin selection and while bigger is sometimes better, often it's not! Remember that long, slow kicking is designed for average reef cruising (in warm or cold water); increasing your speed comfortably underwater (and being able to sustain it) is accomplished by increasing the rate of kicking and reducing those deep kicks to moderate ones at a faster pace. Variable resistance fins, such as all members of the Mares line, give divers a lot more latitude at slow speeds and higher performance at high speeds, all packed in a single open heel or full footpocket fin. 🐠



Scientific testing.

Plana Avanti Quattro outperforms all other fins with its thrust, power, efficiency and fit. The Quattro superiority has been demonstrated with the help of special testing equipment designed jointly with the Institute of Technology and Mechanics of Genoa University.

Avanti, patented features make the difference.

With the Avanti patent, the blade is designed with channels to optimize thrust and minimize effort. The blade of Plana Avanti Quattro by Mares comes with four channels. According to testing, it is 20% more efficient than traditional fins.

Blade stabilizers, ribs and rubber.

The blade stabilizers (Mares patent) improve kick stability and prevent ankle twisting. The patented side ribs in thermoplastic rubber (Mares patent) enhance elastic response and maximize the fin resistance to cuts and abrasion.

Greatest comfort.

The anatomic foot-pocket features new internal Tecralene® ribs to improve fit and stiffen the sole. These internal ribs transfer the leg power to the fin without affecting performance.

ABS, one finger fastening.

With the Mares ABS, (Automatic Buckle System), one hand is needed for strap adjustment and only one finger is needed to fasten and release the side buckles. Another example of Mares technology delivering functional benefits.

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Diving First Aid

BY DENNIS K. GRAVER

Is a diver with standard first aid training adequately prepared to help an injured diver? What differences, if any, are there between standard first aid and diving first aid? Answer the following questions to determine if you are adequately prepared or if you need additional training.

TRUE OR FALSE:

1. A balanced electrolyte solution is the recommended drink for injured scuba divers.
2. Whenever possible, take injured scuba divers to the nearest hyperbaric facility.
3. The signs and symptoms of carbon monoxide poisoning are most pronounced after a diver exits the water.
4. If you are delegating tasks, your top priority after you recover a nonbreathing diver is to get someone to check the casualty's airway, breathing and circulation.
5. Diving accident victims should be placed in the modified Trendelenberg position (head lower than the hips with the entire body tilted to the left).
6. When positioning a casualty on shore at the edge of the water, place the subject perpendicular to the water with the feet higher than the head.
7. The pack strap carry is the preferred rescue exit technique at a shallow, sloping beach.
8. The purpose of a secondary survey is to determine an injured person's vital signs.
9. A diver may experience pulmonary barotrauma during a normal, breathing ascent.
10. Decompression illness and decompression sickness are synonymous.
11. A neurological evaluation is the most important first aid measure for decompression illness.
12. When a diver coughs up pink, frothy sputum, it means he/she has suffered an air embolism.
13. Soaking with vinegar is the first aid for all jellyfish stings.
14. Soaking with vinegar is the primary first aid measure for venomous marine life puncture wounds.
15. Incision and suction are the primary first aid measures for seasnake bites.
16. Not all divers should receive oxygen as a first aid measure.
17. If a seriously injured diver recovers and feels fine after receiving first aid, medical evaluation and treatment are not required.
18. It is not possible to do rescue breathing in the water for a casualty with a suspected neck injury.
19. A secondary survey includes an interview, vital signs check and a head to toe examination.
20. Ease of breathing is the primary reason for placing a breathing casualty on his or her side.
21. Unexplained, sudden diving fatalities are most likely to occur during ascent.
22. You should never leave a diving casualty alone at any time for any reason.
23. You should never move an injured diver unless a situation presents a danger to you or to the injured diver.
24. The most important first aid measure for shock is to elevate the feet.
25. A tension pneumothorax can produce life-threatening shock by restricting circulation.

Answers: (1) F (2) F (3) F (4) F (5) F (6) F (7) F (8) F (9) T (10) F (11) F (12) F (13) F (14) F (15) F (16) F (17) F (18) F (19) T (20) F (21) F (22) F (23) F (24) F (25) T. If you would like more information about diving first aid, there is a new book on the topic. Contact the National Safety Council (800) 621-7619 and order a copy of *Scuba Diving First Aid*. Also, watch for courses in your area.

Broward County Reef Sweep

Ocean Watch Foundation, a Ft. Lauderdale environmental organization, will hold its eighth annual Broward County Reef Sweep **June 8**. In 1995, 300 divers removed 2,634 pounds of trash. Some of the more novel items found included a toilet bowl, rubber alligator, personal massage appliance, fire hose and a "Rude Boy" T-shirt.

A post sweep party will be held at Ft. Lauderdale's Marina Bay Resort, featuring live dance music by The Fabulons.

For more information, contact D.J. Meeks at (954) 474-7744. 🐠

U/W Treasure Hunt

Rick's Dive and Travel Centers will host their 18th annual Underwater Treasure Hunt **June 9** at Lake Ouachita, Hot Springs, Arkansas. More than \$6,000 in trips and prizes will be given away. The entry fee is \$25 and includes a free T-shirt.

For information, call (501) 753-6004; fax (501) 753-5150. 🐠

DAN Oxygen Course

The DAN oxygen provider course will be offered **June 13, July 31 and August 12 and 29** through Smith Diving in Minneapolis, Minnesota. The instructor is Bill King. The course fee is \$60 for DAN members; \$85 for non-members.

For registration or further information, call (612) 789-3483. 🐠

Scuba '96

The Scuba '96 diving exhibition will take place **June 21 through 23** at the Queen Mary, Long Beach, California. In its ninth year, this show features a continuous underwater film festival, including excellent films, seminars by top diving experts, exhibitor presentations, Casino Party and doorprizes. Admission is \$8; seminars and Casino Party are additional.

For information, call (310) 792-2333; fax (310) 792-2336. 🐠

Conchologists of America

The annual convention of the Conchologists of America will be held **July 14 through 20** in St. Petersburg, Florida. The event is sponsored by the St. Petersburg Shell Club and will include slide shows, shell programs, a bourse, local shelling and diving excursions, an auction, a field trip to the Tampa Aquarium and more. Accommodations will be at the lovely beachside Trade-Winds Resort.

For reservations, call (800) 808-9833,

(813) 367-6461 or fax (813) 367-4567. For information on the St. Petersburg Shell club or to enquire about convention events, call Florence Kuczynski at (813) 381-7932. 🐠

International Society of Aquatic Medicine

The fourth annual summer meeting of ISAM will be held **August 3 through 10** at the Fiesta Americana on Cozumel. Thirty hours of category 11 CME credit will be available from the University of Tennessee, School of Medicine. NAUI certification for divemaster and dive instructor will be offered for qualified participants.

For more information, contact Alan E. Thompson, M.D. at (910) 452-1452 or fax (910) 799-5209 or write to ISAM, 6420 Turtle Hall Drive, Wilmington, NC 28409. 🐠

Cayman Madness

Bob Soto's Diving and Caribbean Dive Tours are hosting seven consecutive weeks of diving and social events from **August 29 to October 24** (not including October 4 to 10). This "dive and party" week-long package includes round trip airfare via Cayman Airways or Northwest Airlines, accommodations, daily diving and social activities, featuring the popular underwater treasure hunt. Additionally, there will be free dive equipment testing and use of Nikonos V cameras and strobes. Hundreds of prizes, totaling \$75,000, will be given away.

For more information, contact Caribbean Dive Tours at (800) 786-3483. 🐠

Oceans '96

This year's Oceans '96 conference will be held **September 23 through 26** at The Greater Fort Lauderdale/Broward County Convention Center. This year's theme is The Coastal Ocean—Prospects for the 21st Century. The littoral zones of global oceans and future technologies will be highlighted; nine technical sessions are planned, encompassing more than 60 ocean related areas, as are various other sessions.

For information write to 445 Hoes Lane, P.O. Box 1331, Piscataway, NJ 08855, Attn: Financial Services Department. Or, call (908) 562-5362, fax (908) 981-0538, e-mail: Oceans'96@IEEE.org or peruse the web site at <http://auvibm1.tamu.edu/oes/>. 🐠

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The PADI CDCs listed are current as of 01 April 1996

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Ocean Guide's State of the Art Scuba/Snorkeling Set

When we buy the basic diving essentials—mask, fins and snorkel—we usually wear them for many years. I still dive with my first set of fins and my first mask and snorkel remain in commission, having been passed along to my various aquatic nieces and nephews. I sought high and low for that elusive combination of perfect fit, performance, style (yes, vanity, I admit it) and affordability. Well, if you're a first time buyer or looking to upgrade your current gear, you might take a close

Form, Function and Good Looks

BY TY SAWYER
PHOTOGRAPHY
BY BONNIE J. CARDONE

we've taken a lot of time and effort to enjoy and explore. In the MK250, Ocean Guide has pressed nearly every possible innovation into one fantastic mask. The silicone skirt is wide, soft and supple for a solid and snug fit; appropriate for a wide variety of face sizes and shapes. The springless, swiveling

USER COMMENTS MK250 MASK

Fit: "The soft silicone skirt fit snugly and comfortably; the wide strap and adjustable swivel buckles allowed me to fine tune it perfectly."

Low volume design: "The ultra low volume afforded by the split lens configuration made clearing effortless and, with the lenses closer to my eyes, allowed a greater field of view."

look at Ocean Guide. This company is relatively new to the market and, in its case, it means no bad habits. The gear benefits from the latest in dive technology; the company uses real divers to refine, test and improve it. Consequently, its innovations invariably result in a comfortable, well made and greatly advanced piece of equipment. What's even better, the top of the line gear is, as you will see, affordable.

MK250 DIVE MASK

Whether to a tropical island, a nearby beach or an icy lake, anyone who has carted gear around for any distance doesn't want to be bothered, after all that effort, by an ill-fitting mask—fit and comfort are paramount. It is, after all, our window to an alien world

Ocean Guide's FN409 Hydro Blade, MK250 Mask and SK309 Snorkel are packed with technological advancements and innovations yet remain pleasantly affordable.

buckle is so simple to adjust it can be done on the fly. Just lift the release button and the strap slides effortlessly into the desired position. The strap itself is made of the same soft silicone as the skirt and is extra wide to provide maximum comfort and a secure hold.

The dual lens configuration provides many advantages—ultra low volume, for one.

Clearing is quick and simple and drag is kept to a minimum.

And, because the two lenses are closer to your eyes (and because they are large to begin with) your field of view is increased. For those among us who sit too close to computer screens or have otherwise developed a need for corrective vision, the lenses are interchangeable with easily installed optical lenses.

The nose pocket can accommodate a complete range of sniffers and there is ample room for easy equalization even when wearing thick gloves. The





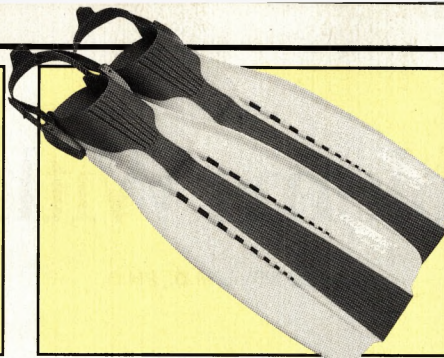
The MK250 ultra low volume, split lens mask has a supple silicone skirt, wide strap and springless, swiveling buckles.

injection molded frame is solidly protective and available in a wide range of fashionable colors—blue, green, pink, yellow, black and clear. The MK250 mask retails for \$41.95.

Unless your face is devoid of contour, chances are this mask will fit well. Granted, not everyone has the same face and for that reason Ocean Guide offers a complete line of equally as well engineered and thought out mask frames and styles for every diver's unique needs.

FN409 HYDRO BLADE

Today's fins have improved in miraculous ways as a result of technological advancements. Resiliency, strength, power and comfort are all combined into Ocean Guide's Hydro Blade, a top of the line fin by any measure. The first noticeable innovations are the ridges running along the front and back. These help channel the wa-

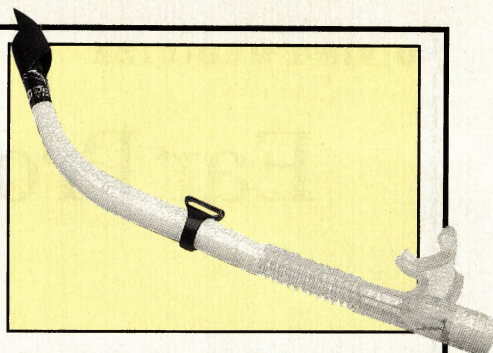


The technically innovative FN409 Hydro Blade combines resiliency, strength, power and exceptional comfort.

and more fun. The fin also has a comfortable-as-an-old-shoe thermoplastic open heel footpocket bonded to the thermoplastic blade. This gives your foot and fin a feeling of interconnectedness. There are also several nonskid ridges under the footpocket for sure-footedness on deck. Add swivel buckles for easy donning and doffing and a pushbutton adjustable fin strap for a tailor made fit and you have just about all you could ask for in a fin of any caliber. The Hydro Blade comes in black, blue, yellow, green, pink and white and in sizes medium, large and extra large. This advanced, high power, low work fin retails for only \$92.95.

SK309 SNORKEL

If you're like me, when you snorkel you stay under until the last possible moment has elapsed. When you ascend to the surface, you rise with a purpose and an imperative as old as time—you need a nice big gulp of air, you need it fast and you need it, preferably, saltwater free. That's usually a lot to ask from some plastic tube with a mouthpiece. But, Ocean Guide has definitely developed an easy breather with incredibly dry air delivery. The SK309 Snorkel has an air passage ample enough to satisfy your greatest demand for air. The soft silicone mouthpiece rests comfortably in your mouth and the bite tabs reduce jaw fatigue. This mouthpiece is also completely adjustable for natural placement owing to the flexible hose. Smooth on the inside for easy air passage and no trapping of water, the hose is corrugated on the exterior for a full range of movement. The SK309's purge valve functions exceptionally well, discharging water with a quick exhalation. On the end of the snorkel, there is an ingenious device that, on first inspection, looks like a whistle. This clever attachment guides water that might wash over the snorkel away from the opening while keeping the air passage clear for breathing. It works wonderfully, especially when



The comfortable SK309 dry snorkel has a flexible hose, excellent purge valve and soft, silicone mouthpiece.

combined with the smooth bore of the air passage and the easy purging valve, in ensuring your air passage will remain as free from water as possible. There is also a handy plastic snap-on keeper for simple and secure attachment to a mask. The SK309 comes in black, blue, yellow, pink, white, green and clear. For \$29.95 you will be hard-

USER COMMENTS

SK309 SNORKEL

Dry air delivery: "During a long surface swim, the SK309 provided a sufficiently dry breath of air while my breathing remained normal and unstrained. The purge valve was efficient and quick when needed."

Comfort: "Because the hose is flexible, I was able to situate the mouthpiece in the most natural position possible. My jaw fatigue was almost nil."

USER COMMENTS

FN409 HYDRO BLADE

Comfort: "The thermoplastic footpocket is soft yet sturdy for a good feel in the water."

Workload: "A good amount of thrust per finstroke."

Con: "This is a lot of fin to move through the water. The user needs to have fairly good lower body strength."

ter to transfer the power of a kick into forward thrust. A flexible thermoplastic center strip runs the full length of each fin. This more pliant material creates a superior and more efficient hydrodynamic curve that results in increased propulsion and reduced resistance during the kick cycle. More power means less work and reduced air consumption, resulting in more time below

pressed to find a better bargain or a more exceptional snorkel.

CONCLUSION

As divers and consumers we all want to feel we get our money's worth for our purchases. Ocean Guide has responded to divers' need for top flight equipment at an affordable price with its MK250 Dive Mask, SK309 Snorkel and the FN409 Hydro Blade. All feature innovative, advanced technology, wonderful usability and almost miraculous affordability. In a world where genuine bargains are few and far between, it's pleasant to see a company looking out for its consumers in such a friendly and commendable way. For information on Ocean Guide's complete line of high quality dive equipment, fax (310) 212-3044. 🐠

Ear Problems With Diving

BY FRED BOVE, M.D., PH.D.

Ears have several parts, each with its own unique set of diving related disorders. The external ear includes the ear itself and the canal leading to the eardrum. The eardrum separates the external from the middle and inner ear.

EXTERNAL EAR PROBLEMS

The ear structure can be injured by trauma. Feeding fish U/W sometimes invites a nip on the ear by a dissatisfied customer. Occasionally, a fish bite becomes severe enough to require treatment.

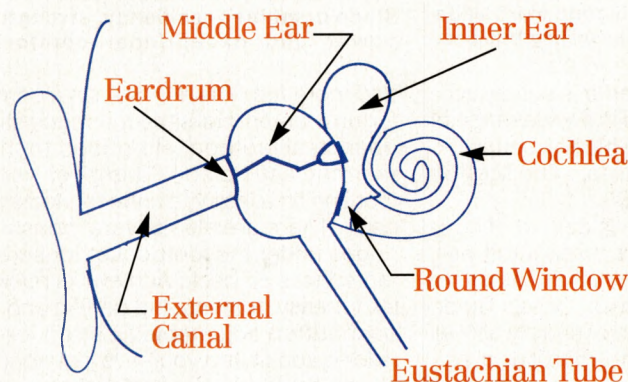
SWIMMER'S EAR. External canal infections, sometimes called swimmer's ear, occur when water accumulates and remains long enough to allow bacteria and fungus to grow. This is best prevented by removing water from the ear canal. You know when there's water in there because a rumbling sound will be heard when you move your head. Prevention of external infections is best done by using a commercial drying solution such as Otic Domeboro or Auro-Dri. A few drops in each ear before and after water exposure is adequate.

EXOSTOSES. When divers are constantly exposed to cold water, bony growths, called exostoses, may develop in the external ear canal. They will ultimately grow large enough to block the canal, causing diminished hearing and infections because water cannot drain. Both ear canals are involved but the eardrum is rarely, if ever, affected. These growths are not tumors. Some experts think they are a natural reaction to prevent cold water from reaching the eardrum. Ending the cold water exposure usually stops the growth but the growths do not disappear when the cold stimulus is removed. If they become large and block the ear canal, they must be removed surgically but there is a risk of damage to the eardrum and to nerves that control the facial muscles. Covering the ear canals with a hood when exposed to cold water can help in prevention. The hood will trap water and allow it to warm enough to avoid cold irritation.

Exostoses are easily diagnosed. A physician can see them when examining the external ear canal with an otoscope.

MIDDLE EAR PROBLEMS

The middle ear includes the chamber



The ear is a complex structure with the potential for several unique diving disorders. Protection and prevention are the solutions to healthy ears.

behind the eardrum, which contains the small bones of the ear that transmit sound to the hearing organ. Connected into the middle ear is the eustachian tube from the throat—necessary for pressure equalization—and the mastoid cells, which are spaces in the bone of the skull. The middle ear is easily injured by barotrauma (squeeze) and is susceptible to infection.

EAR SQUEEZE. Ear squeeze, with injury to the eardrum, is the most common diving related illness. Difficulty clearing or equalizing the ears is a problem that every diver has experienced. It occurs when you cannot open the eustachian tubes to allow air to enter the middle ear and balance the pressure across the eardrum (see the ear diagram). To avoid ear squeeze, be sure there is no congestion in your nose or throat when you dive. Begin clearing your ears on the surface, before you descend, and continue to clear every foot or two as you go down. Waiting for ear pain to occur before you try to equalize is a bad habit. Usually, you will be unable to clear the blocked ear at this stage. You must ascend three or four feet, equalize, then try another descent.

Besides causing direct injury to the eardrum, middle ear squeeze produces a swelling of the lining of the middle ear and eustachian tube plus fluid and blood accumulation in the middle ear. Often, the fluid will persist until the swelling has subsided and normal eustachian tube function returns. This frequently requires five or six days and occasionally one to two weeks. The presence of other factors,

such as nasal allergy or irritation from smoking, can prolong the recovery period. With middle ear fluid accumulation, sound is not transmitted properly to the inner ear but it still responds to noises present in the head that are usually masked by outside sounds. Thus, an occasional hissing or buzzing can be heard. Hissing or buzzing following an ear squeeze may indicate middle ear or inner ear injury. If these sounds are not accompanied by other inner ear injury symptoms—such as vertigo or hearing loss—are not loud or are intermittent, they are probably related to middle ear squeeze.

As mentioned above, squeeze can be avoided by clearing the ears every foot or two during descent. When a squeeze occurs, there is some damage to the eardrum. If the damage is severe and ear problems persist for several days, medical attention should be sought. Most middle ear squeeze can be successfully treated with medication but you should not dive until the ear is completely clear.

INFECTIONS. A blocked middle ear owing to eustachian tube obstruction, repeated ear squeeze or water entering the middle ear from a perforated eardrum, can result in a middle ear infection, permanent perforation of the eardrum and reduced hearing. These consequences are fully preventable by careful attention to ear equalization when diving. If your ears won't equalize, don't dive until they do. If you have repeated trouble equalizing, have an ear and nose evaluation by a

(Continued on Page 50)

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Henderson's Jerry Garcia Suits

While the late Jerry Garcia was best known for his music and lead singing role in the classic band known as the Grateful Dead, his hours offstage often led him in directions far from his music. Jerry was also an artist and the designs he created became world famous. His ties are worn by well heeled business folks who want a gentle reminder of the vitality of the Grateful Dead while sitting in an otherwise boring business meeting. Even less well known was Garcia's passion for the sea and his love of diving. Yep, that's right, folks, Garcia also traveled the world as we do in search of great diving experiences. His commitment to both diving and marine conservation remain, along with his songs and art; a lasting tribute to this famous artist.

A couple of years ago, Garcia started to think about a signature line of dive-wear. He commissioned Henderson Aquatics, a leading manufacturer, to try out a couple of designs and see what happened. The result is the Henderson Jerry Garcia Polartec line, which incorporates the best of current divewear technology (Polartec Thermal Stretch Fabric) with the unusual addition of Garcia art to the shoulder epaulets. Throw in the logo

The Hottest Polartec Around!

TEXT AND PHOTOGRAPHY
BY BILL GLEASON

and presto, you have state of the art technology combined with visionary art; a garment that is pleasant to the eye while capturing all of the superb performance characteristics of warm water divewear.

Polartec is the fabric of choice for warm water divers. It replaces 2 to 3mm neoprene suits and provides far greater warmth than its now almost obsolete Lycra cousins. With a Polartec Thermal Stretch garment you get all of the benefits of neoprene with none of the drawbacks. Here's how it works:

Although the warmth of 2 to 3mm neoprene equals

that of Polartec, a Polartec suit is much less bulky (both to pack and to wear) than neoprene. Polartec suits are also neutrally buoyant, requiring no additional weights.

The fleece lining makes a Polartec garment easier to slip on than a wetsuit. In addition, fleece holds some water while you are diving (this adds insulation) then repels the water once you're topside. Neoprene garments absorb water and hold it for a relatively long time. Putting on a wet wetsuit for another dive can be more chilling than the dive itself! Polartec fleece dries very rapidly. All you have to do is leave the suit inside out (that's the way it comes off) and your suit will be dry in one-half hour!

(Continued on Page 31)

Henderson's Jerry Garcia Polartec divewear combines the latest in technology with Garcia's unique artistic touch.



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IKELITE **Aquashot II**

You know how easy the single-use cameras are to use and the excellent results they provide above water. Now you can get the same simplicity of operation and excellent results underwater. Start with the Ikelite AquaSnap, a 35mm single-use 27 exposure camera and place it in an Aquashot II housing. The results are amazing. Sharp, colorful photographs rivaling those taken by expensive underwater camera systems. Operates to 125 feet (38m).

Aquashot Accessories

Water Correcting Lens allows close focus for sharper more colorful photographs.

Macro Kit focuses 8" for close-ups of small marine creatures.

Substrobe AQ/S helps to eliminate backscatter and provides more light for enhanced color.

NEW AquaSnap Camera

No need to worry where to buy cameras for the Aquashot II housing. Ikelite now offers a disposable camera for use above water or in the housing. The AquaSnap camera features built-in flash and 27-exposure film.

See the Aquashot II and New AquaSnap camera at your local dive shop.



ikelite

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Underwater Cleanup Tips

BY JEANNE BEAR SLEEPER
PHOTOGRAPHY BY BILL GLEASON

Participating in an underwater cleanup is a fun way to improve the environment, meet other divers and do something different on a dive in a familiar area.

Attention is focused on beach and underwater cleanups annually during the third weekend in September. That's when the Center for Marine Conservation coordinates a worldwide cleanup day. This year, September 21 is the date you may want to organize or participate in a cleanup project and be part of a global ecological event.

Want to be part of the solution, not the problem? Take note of the following tips for safe and effective underwater cleanups.

DIVE TIPS

When diving in a cleanup, wear all usual equipment required for scuba diving, including a BC and an alternate air source. Even in warm water, wear gloves and a jumpsuit for abrasion protection. Dive with a buddy and follow your dive plan. Don't let an exciting piece of trash cause you to run out of air or turn a no decompression dive into a decompression dive. Make slow ascents and never use your BC as a liftbag.

Coral reefs are alive, so you will want your intrusion to be minimal. Be patient and move slowly; exercise good buoyancy control. Make all of your actions slow and deliberate. Gently remove things from the reef so you do not harm more than you help.

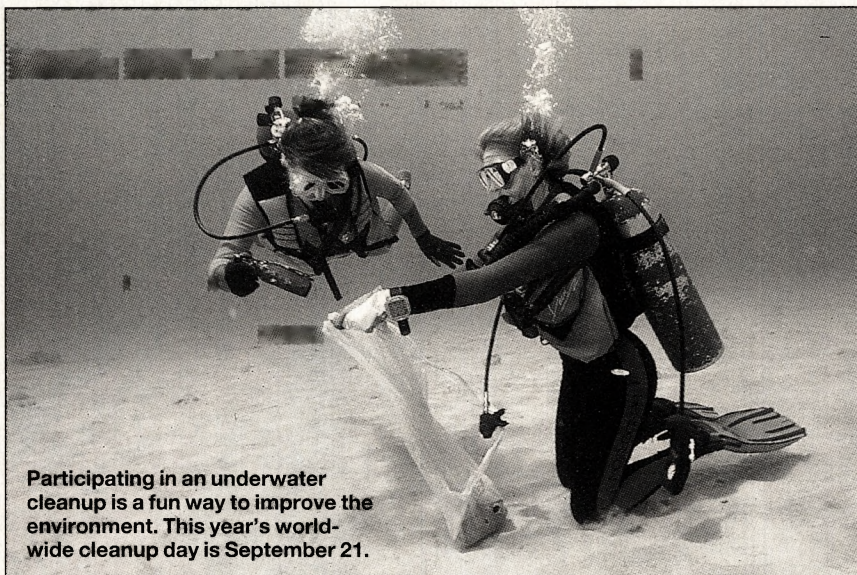
Concentrate on cleaning up a small area. It is better to go slow and remove trash without disturbing the plants and animals than to dive like a road grader cutting a swath across the site. Avoid touching the living reef with your hands or fins. Try to work in a head down, feet up position. If your legs are higher than your head, it is less likely you will bump the reef or stir up a cloud of silt.

SPECIAL EQUIPMENT

In addition to your regular diving gear, you will need some equipment to make trash collection easier.

- Mesh dive bag—lightweight, easy to carry, water flows through, locks shut and most trash won't fall through the mesh holes.

- Side cutters—also called wire cutters



or dikes, to cut wire, plastic or monofilament line. You may want to attach a lanyard to avoid losing the cutters.

- Toenail clippers—heavy duty, large size clippers work well to cut monofilament line or six-pack plastic rings.

- Float and line—small sized marker buoys can be used to mark items too heavy or dangerous for your dive team to recover.

- Liftbag—if you know how to use a liftbag, it can be useful for retrieving filled objects or attaching to a mesh bag heavy with collected trash. It can also help keep the mesh bag afloat while you are swimming back to the shore or a boat.

- Slate—for recording the data, as you go, on what is collected. On shore this is done with data cards. Grids can be drawn on a slate for one buddy to record as the other collects items, which saves sorting through the trash when back on shore.

TECHNIQUES AND WHAT TO PICK UP

Knowing what to pick up and how, can be tricky. Start with a common sense approach to your decision making. Your goal is to remove unsightly litter and trash that may injure animals. In doing that, do not cause harm to the reef inhabitants or yourself.

For example, if you see a ball of monofilament fishing line partially embed-

ded in coral, do not yank on the line. Simply snip the exposed line off with clippers. This prevents an animal from becoming entangled, yet does not rip apart the reef. Using a knife to saw through plastic fishing line can also damage the surrounding reef, so stick to side cutters or toenail clippers. On the other hand, if you find a thick rope, a sharp or serrated knife may be the only effective choice.

Remember that some rubbish may be critter refuges and should be left. Use good judgment; leave a soft drink can if it is someone's home. If you find garbage covered with coral growth, leave it or only cut away the part that is free floating and could cause harm to marine animals. It is a judgment call for you and your buddy.

Common materials that you may find include plastic, glass, rubber, metal, paper, wood and cloth. All are foreign to the marine environment and have the potential for organisms to swallow, become trapped, be smothered or be covered up. Plastic bags and six pack holders can get wrapped around an animal's neck or swallowed, causing slow, painful deaths. Fishing line has become more of a problem lately as super strong materials have come into common use. Fishing line entangles everything from sponges to scuba divers, making it a high priority for removal.

If you dive around a pier, marina or popular anchorage, you may be sur-

prised at the weird items that end up in the water. Beds, toilet bowls, large appliances, shopping carts, lawn chairs, clothes, games, cameras, barbecues and sport equipment have been recovered during recent cleanups. If the cleanup site is near navigable waterways you may find such trash as food wrappings, boxes, cocktail glasses or bulk produce bags, tossed off ships. If the cleanup area is near a commercial fishing zone, you may retrieve parts of nets, floats, salt bags, lures or parts of traps.

Of course, once the trash is brought to shore and collection data tabulated, it needs to be placed in trash bags or bins and disposed of properly. One of the challenges of cleanup organizers is to make certain they have big dumpsters for the volume of trash that may be collected, including oversized items.

WHAT TO AVOID

An underwater cleanup is a volunteer, recreational activity. You may find hazardous materials that need to be left for professionals to handle. They are beyond the scope of your training and acceptable risk factor.

Avoid touching or coming near any of the following items:

- Fifty-five gallon drums—can be harmless or toxic nightmares, so keep your distance, mark the area with a buoy and notify the appropriate authorities.

- Five gallon pails—the pail could be a pickle pail off a cruise ship or the remnants of a lethal chemical storage container. Keep your distance.

- Ordnance—ammunition from shotguns or large military-style ordnance should be left untouched. Mark the site and report your find to the appropriate authorities.

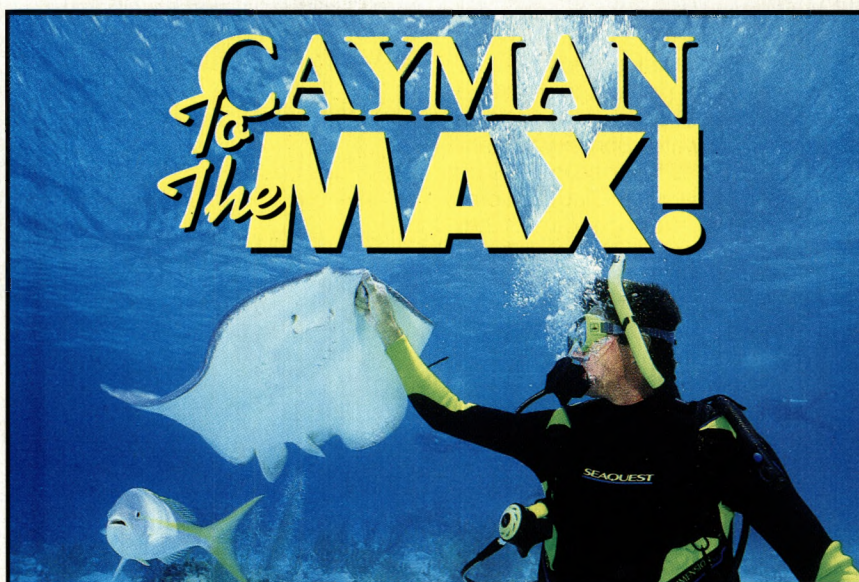
- Medical waste—syringes, examination gloves, bloody bandages or disposable instruments unfortunately end up in the water or washed up on beaches. Do not handle these items. Report their location so trained personnel with special equipment can retrieve them. Medical waste needs to be placed in specially designed solid wall containers.

- Batteries—can leak acid, which is extremely dangerous if it comes in contact with your skin. Do not attempt to move large batteries.

- Glass—is not safe to collect if you have a mesh bag. If you are using an extra heavy duty, vinyl dive bag that will not be punctured by broken glass and have heavy gloves that will not be lacerated by the sharp edges, then you may be able to safely recover broken glass. It is a judgment call; err on the side of safety.

- Heavy things—do not try to retrieve items too heavy for you to safely lift. Even if you have a liftbag and can get the item

(Continued on Page 52)



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The southwest's most spectacular gathering of diving's elite will take place June 7 to 9 in Houston, Texas. Divers, retailers, manufacturers and those who are just curious will immerse themselves in a watersport extravaganza. SeaSpace was founded in 1969 by the Houston Underwater Club. The proceeds from the show go to the 1996 SeaSpace Permanent Education Fund, which will award more than \$32,000 in marine-related scholarships and grants.

An exhibit hall at the Hyatt Regency Hotel will be filled with 150 booths displaying the latest diving and watersport equipment and presenting environmental awareness issues. There will also be a number of seminars, co-sponsored by PADI, covering a wide range of topics. Those curious about scuba can take advantage of a free introduction in the Hyatt's pool and children will be able to snorkel there as well.

The World's Most Popular Dive Show

BY TAMARA COLLINS

SeaSpace '96

Photographers and film buffs will find a special element of SeaSpace just for them. There will be an Underwater Photography Gallery, featuring the work of artists entered in the marine photography competition. Many of scuba diving's most accomplished cinematographers will premiere their films at the film festival, including Marty Snyderman's *To Be With Sharks* and Bill Lovin's *When Dolphins Dream*. There will also be photo presentations from Burt Jones and Maurine Shimlock's *Secret Sea Visions* and a multi-projector synchronized slide presentation, *Friends in Nature*, from Jackie and Mary Lou Reid.

SeaSpace '96 will open with a gala event on Friday night. Sponsored by Sherwood Scuba and TACA Airlines, the Caribbean Casino Party will be held in the Hyatt Regency's Imperial Ballroom. Guests can mingle, dance and try their luck at blackjack, roulette, craps and wheel of fortune. Capping off the evening will be an auction of travel and equipment prizes, courtesy TACA and Sherwood.

The setting for all these wonderful festivities could not be more appropriate than the Hyatt Regency Houston. The



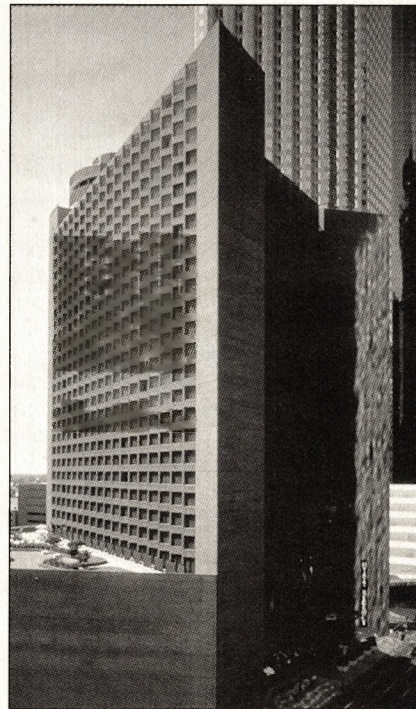
The beautiful, 33 story atrium of the Hyatt Regency Houston.



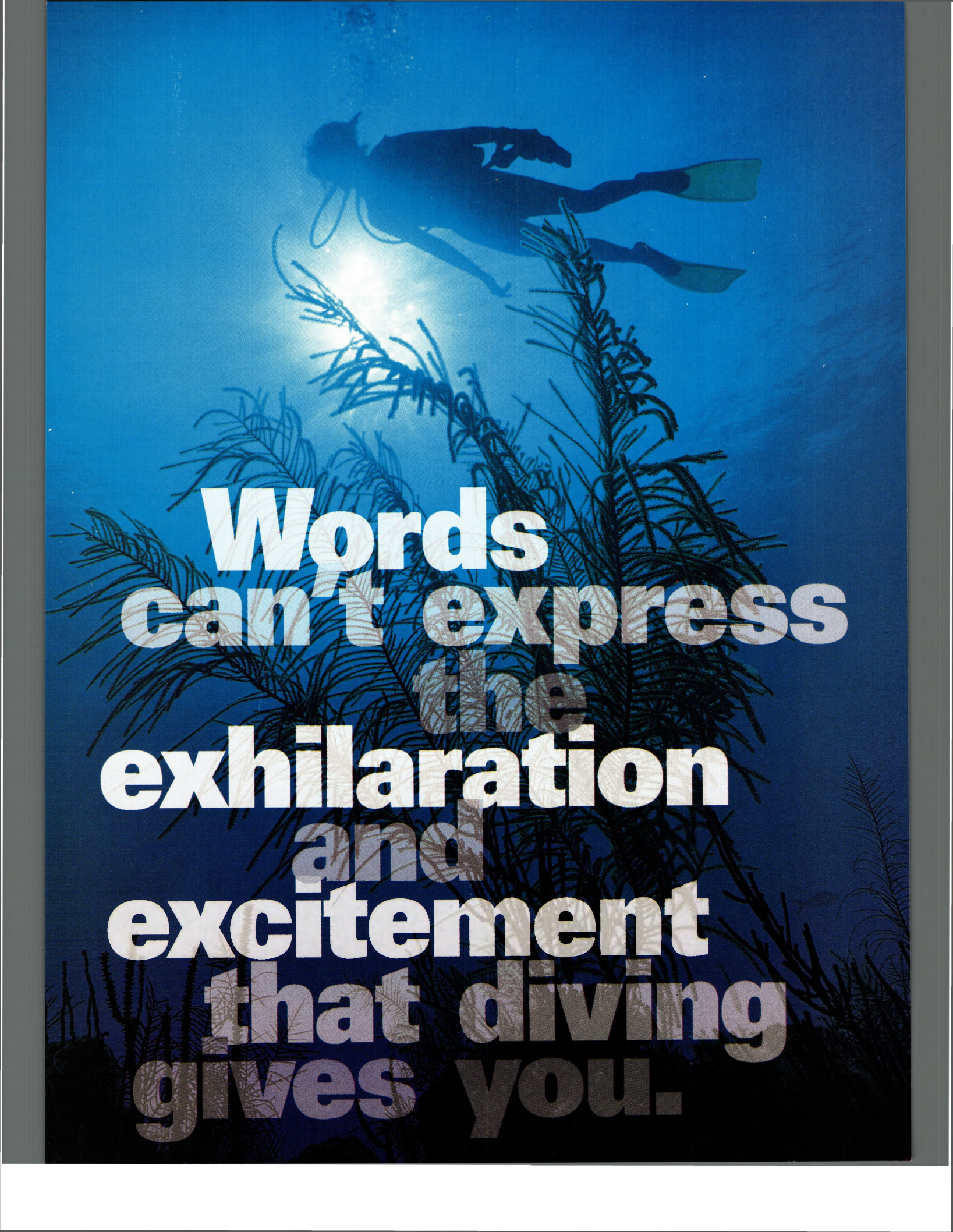
photo: Joyce and Fred Burek

Above: Blackjack is one of the many activities available at the Caribbean Casino Party in the Hyatt's Imperial Ballroom. Right: The 963 room Hyatt Regency Houston will host SeaSpace '96, June 7 to 9.

high rise features 963 rooms, 66,000 square feet of meeting space and a dramatic 33 story atrium. It has all the amenities of a first class hotel, including special rooms for business travelers, three restaurants, two bars, 24 hour security, free shuttle service and a pool and fitness center. In the heart of downtown, the Hyatt is at 1200 Louisiana, Houston, TX 77002. For information or reservations, call (713) 654-1234, (800) 233-1234 or fax (713) 951-0934.



To receive information about SeaSpace or order tickets, send a self-addressed, stamped envelope to SeaSpace Brochure, P.O. Box 3753, Houston, Texas 77253-3753 or call (713) 467-6675. 🐟

An underwater photograph featuring a diver in silhouette against a bright sun or light source, creating a lens flare effect. The diver is positioned in the upper half of the frame, swimming horizontally. Below the diver, there are several tall, thin seagrass plants that reach towards the light. The water is a deep blue color.

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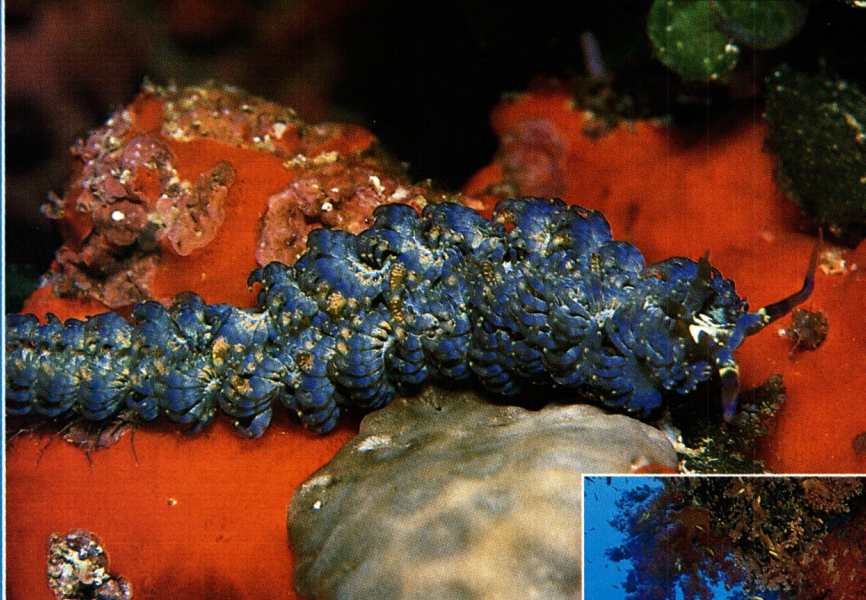
True reflex viewing, the world's most advanced autofocus system, Nikonos' ultra-sophisticated matrix metering and other technological advancements that border on the miraculous, bring you creative possibilities that only a few years ago were an underwater photographer's fantasy.

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▲ The intriguing world of macro photography with a Nikonos-V and extension tubes is always exciting. TTL automatic flash operation provides reliable exposures.

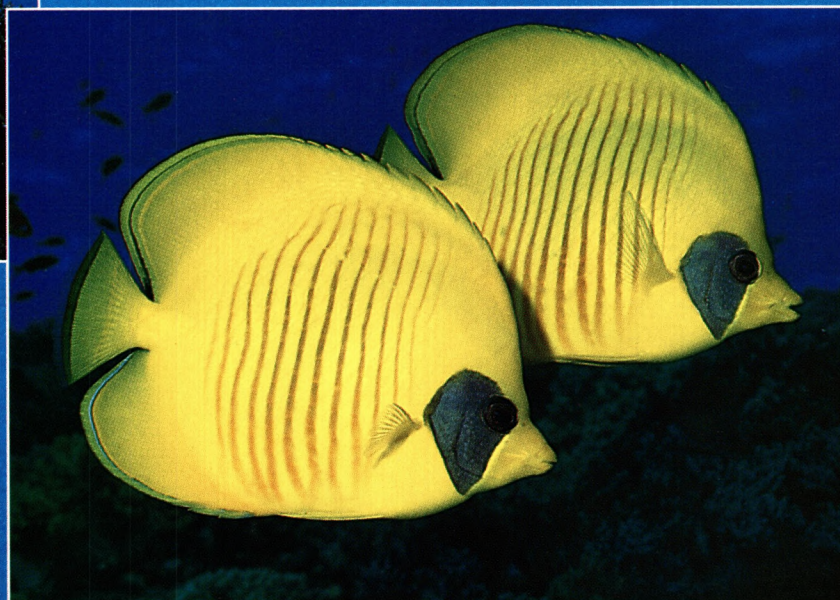
Reef panoramas are easy work for the 13mm Fisheye-Nikkor lens on the RS, with an incredible 170° view of the underwater realm. ▼

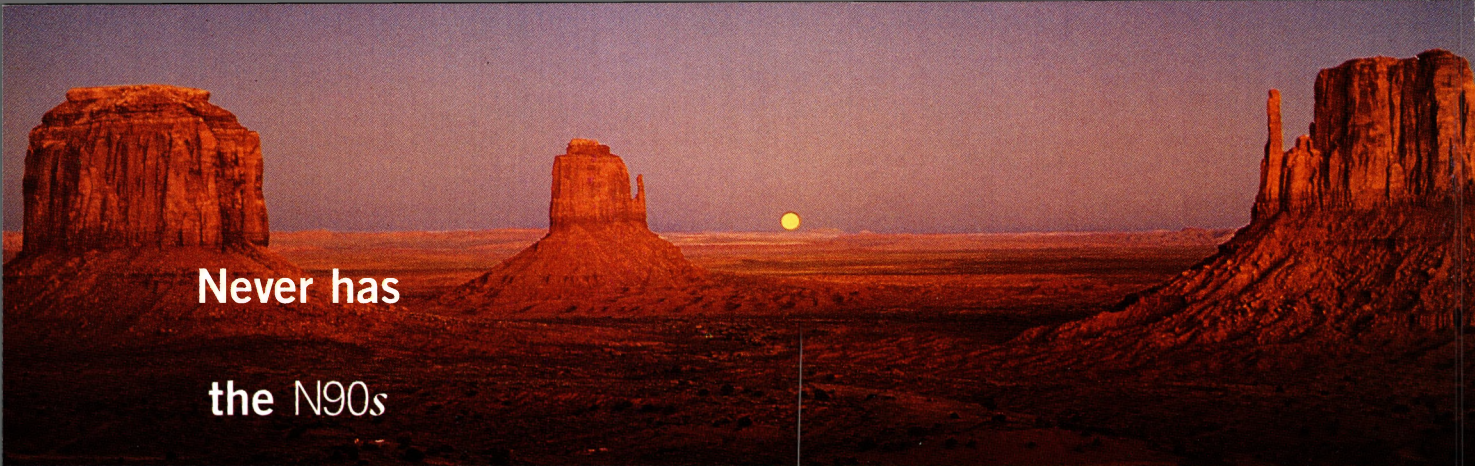


▲ The magnificent wide angle palette of coral colors articulately rendered with a 15mm Nikkor lens on a Nikonos-V. A compact system, designed for fast, easy handling.



The 50mm Micro-Nikkor is the workhorse lens of the Nikonos RS system. Capable of continuous focusing to life-size reproduction, this is the best tool for capturing the elusive beauty of shy marine life. ▼





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Quicksilver Adventure

Snorkeling with Florida's Manatees

TEXT AND PHOTOGRAPHY BY STEPHEN FRINK

Quicksilver inflatable boats have been responsible for some of my most exciting adventures on the water. While many boaters use inflatables as tenders or dinghies to their larger yachts, I have found the Quicksilver to be a wonderful primary boat for many applications. These sturdy and stylish inflatables have transported me among Gray Whales in Baja's San Ignacio Lagoon, Humpback Whales in the Silver Banks of the Dominican Republic and dolphins and sharks in The Bahamas. I have cruised the scenic coastline of Maine in a Quicksilver inflatable and photographed Orcas from one among the San Juan Islands off

the State of Washington. A Quicksilver has carried me to the coral reefs and shipwrecks off my home in Key Largo for countless scuba and snorkel expeditions and I even used a Quicksilver inflatable to dive a Great Lakes shipwreck. Now I have yet another Quicksilver adventure to add to my logbook—snorkeling with Manatees.

Each year, from December to March, up to 300 Manatees (*Trichechus manatus latirostris*) winter in the warm, spring-fed waters of Crystal River, Florida. This is a portion of a Florida population that was estimated at 2,250 in the 1996 Manatee census. Considering the easy automobile access to Crystal River (just

80 miles north of Tampa at the junction of Highways 44 and 19) and the portable nature of the Quicksilver inflatable, this was a perfect expedition for our Quicksilver team.

QUICKSILVER ON LOCATION

Our base of operations for this year's Manatee expedition was the Port Paradise Resort at Crystal River. In addition to comfortable accommodations and a boat ramp to launch our inflatables, there is a dive shop on the premises that was helpful in providing the crucial knowledge of where and when to best find Manatees. And, since **King Spring**, one of Crystal River's prime Manatee congregation points, is just a couple of hundred yards from the marina, the location is ideal.

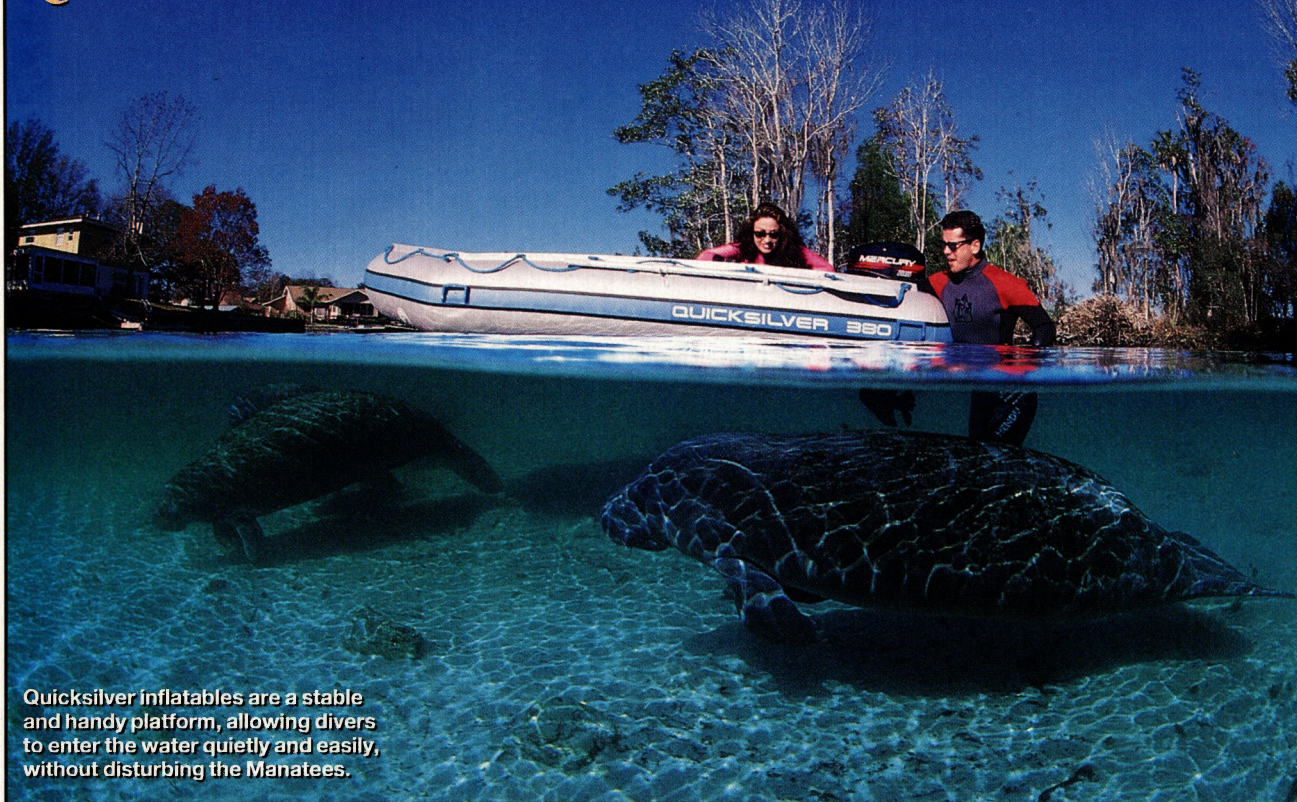
The boats we chose for our Manatee expedition were the Quicksilver 380 and Quicksilver 380E. The 380 portion of the nomenclature refers to the inflatable's length (380 centimeters or 12 feet, 6 inches), while the E designates the Euro version. Inflatables are quite popular in Europe but whereas the North American market seems to embrace the sport version with a more pointed bow to better deflect spray and enhance performance, the



Portable, easy to set up and surprisingly roomy, Quicksilver's QS 380 model proved a most capable dive boat for navigating the waterways of Florida's Crystal River.



Quicksilver Adventure



Quicksilver inflatables are a stable and handy platform, allowing divers to enter the water quietly and easily, without disturbing the Manatees.

European preference is for a more rounded bow that provides additional room up front for passengers and gear. We equipped our inflatables with 25 horsepower outboards, one of which was a Mercury and one a Mariner. (Quicksilver is a division of Mercury Marine, which also manufactures Mercury, Mariner and Force outboards, as well as Mercruiser stern-drives and a huge variety of marine parts and accessories.)

We purposely arrived mid-week, knowing Crystal River is an extremely popular destination on weekends and holidays during the Manatee season. Even so, we knew that early morning and late afternoon would probably be our best chances for clear water and minimal intrusion from other snorkelers. This meant we had to put our boats together quickly. Fortunately, it only takes about 15 minutes to assemble a Quicksilver and mount an outboard engine. This brief assembly time allowed us to get out on the river at dawn's light even on the first day.

We unpacked the inflatables from their heavy duty tote bags, unrolled the deflated boat on the ground, installed the aluminum channels and modular floorboards and pumped air into the inflatable tubes (three separate air chambers plus an inflatable keel). The boats

all come standard with a high velocity foot pump but we brought a couple of accessories to speed this portion of the assembly. There is a four horsepower electric air pump that inflates any Quicksilver chamber to 3.25 psi in less than two minutes, as well as a lightweight electric inflator/deflator that operates from a 12 volt battery if 110 volt service is not available. Since we had electricity available to us at the Port Paradise marina, the four horsepower pump made assembly a breeze. Once the boats were together, we set the outboard in place, tightened a pair of thumb screws, attached a fuel line and went off in search of Manatees!

There were eight of us in the group and, though each Quicksilver 380 is rated to accept six passengers, with a full complement of underwater cameras and snorkel gear we were comfortable with four in each inflatable. For our first encounters we went for the nearby King Spring, less than ten minutes away from the dock, even at idle speed. Here, a roped in area designates a Manatee sanctuary at the south end of Banana Island. However, there is a swim and dive access corridor that includes the mouth of the spring. Within this corridor there are a dozen or more Manatees, swimming, feeding and dozing. For the most part

they are very willing photographic subjects, although the moderate water clarity and large size of Manatees dictates the use of a wide angle lens. (Manatees are an average of 9 feet long and weigh 1,000 pounds but they can grow as large as 13 feet and weigh more than one and one-half tons.)

I had heard this season was very good for Manatee sightings along Crystal River but I was surprised at the size of the congregation around King Spring. Early in the morning there were probably a couple of dozen and at least half that number seemed to stay all day long. We discovered early on that our best encounters were on snorkel rather than scuba. Even though the Quicksilvers made handy dive boats, allowing us to enter the water quietly and conveniently by slipping over the low tubes, the sound of the regulator exhaust seemed to frighten Manatees. Our best encounters happened while we floated quietly on the surface and the naturally curious Manatees actually approached us.

While at King Spring we had a productive session with a couple different mother/calf groups, as well as some photogenic adult males. We were allowed very near by the Manatees, who showed no sign of distress at our presence and seemed amused at the inter-

action. This was in contrast to what we observed when an unruly group of snorkelers arrived on a much larger commercial vessel. As they noisily splashed in the water and aggressively swam toward the Manatees, the animals wisely departed to the safety of their sanctuary. Fins had stirred the sediment into suspension and effective underwater photo opportunities were at least temporarily gone. Gratefully, we had our own mode of transportation, our own schedule and a map, so we left King Spring to the crowd and carefully motored to the **Three Sisters Springs**.

While the Quicksilver QS 380 equipped with a 25 horsepower outboard will easily get up on a plane with four adults and will even pull a waterskier, speed was not our objective as we navigated the scenic waterways within the Crystal River National Wildlife Refuge. As we idled along we saw anhingas drying their wings atop sanctuary signs, cormorants diving for baitfish and majestic ospreys flying above forested islands. Of course, there is plenty of civilization here as well, with the waterways meandering past marinas and private homes. The warm air was a pleasant contrast to the 72°F water and we unzipped our Henderson wetsuits, relaxed against the silver tubes and soaked up the rays. After 15 pleasant minutes we sighted

GUIDELINES FOR RESPONSIBLE INTERACTION WITH MANATEES

It should be noted here that anyone operating boats in the vicinity of Manatees should have some knowledge of the Manatee's habits to avoid the very real possibility of running into one with the blades of a propeller. Manatees are mammals and must rise to the surface regularly to breathe. When they are active this might be as often as every four minutes; when they are relaxed and conserving energy, it might be every 15 minutes. Sometimes only the tip of the Manatee's nose will be exposed or the animal may be floating just a few feet below the waterline, making it very difficult to discern in turbid water or adverse light conditions. This, combined with the animal's color, rounded shape and lack of any dorsal fin protruding from the water, makes them sadly vulnerable to being hit by moving boats. The only way to navigate in waters where Manatees might be in residence is at idle speed and with great vigilance. To do otherwise is both illegal and immoral.

Manatees are protected by law, specifically the Marine Mammal Protection Act of 1972 and the Endangered Species Act of 1973, making it illegal to harass, capture or kill any marine mammal. In addition, the Florida Manatee Sanctuary Act

states, "it is unlawful for any person, at any time, by any means, intentionally or negligently, to annoy, molest, harass, or disturb any Manatee." This is not to say Manatees can't be observed and photographed in and around the water. Benign interaction is encouraged but please follow these regulations:

1. Don't enter designated/posted sanctuaries for any reason. These sites will be clearly marked and only Manatees or permitted researchers should ever be inside the boundaries.
2. Operate your boat at idle/no wake speed wherever Manatees might be present.
3. Avoid harassing a Manatee. By definition, any activity that alters the animal's natural behavior is harassment and may include chasing a Manatee while swimming or diving, poking or prodding a Manatee with any object, separating an individual from a group (especially a calf from a cow) or snagging, hooking, holding, grabbing, pinching or riding a Manatee.
4. Don't feed Manatees. Doing so alters their natural behavior and may make them too tolerant of human interaction. Manatees are probably too friendly for their own good and feeding them is not beneficial.



Bill Gius of Quicksilver has an up close encounter with a curious calf. Manatees generally seem amused when interacting with humans.

Quicksilver Adventure

Three Sisters Springs.

There were already a couple of boats tied to trees around the basin at Three Sisters, one of which, coincidentally, belonged to a friend, Herb Segars. Herb is a talented underwater photographer who specializes in documenting underwater New England but he also tries to visit Crystal River each year with wife Ronnie to photograph the Manatees. He confirmed that Three Sisters was one of his favorite sites because the water is consistently clear and, at least in the early morning and late afternoon, Manatees are likely to be in residence. True to his prediction, when we slipped into the water we found a playful mother and calf but the calf proved difficult to photograph because of its exasperating habit of rubbing along my legs. I'd try to get my over/under camera setup to include both the Manatee and the Quicksilver but before I could focus, this not so little baby would be tucked beneath my legs, scratching itself on my wetsuit. The photos weren't wonderful that day but it was a very special experience.

We shot perhaps a dozen rolls of film in the fading afternoon light that first day at Three Sisters. I came to appreciate the convenience of the Quicksilver as a photo boat as well, for in the shallow waters I could stand on the bottom and lean over the low freeboard of the boat to easily change film. Since Crystal River is fresh water, there was no need for a camera rinse. I just had to dry my hands, hair and back of the camera, clean and grease the O-ring

and pop in a fresh roll of film.

Three Sisters was our destination early the next morning as well. We left our Quicksilver inflatables completely assembled and docked at the Point Paradise Marina, making it a simple matter to just step aboard with our gear and get underway for another dawn departure. With the steam rising off the river in the cold morning air we pulled into the Three Sisters basin to the exciting sight of more than a dozen Manatees still asleep on the bottom, huddled together as if for warmth and comfort. I crept in quietly for my shots.

Once again I tried to frame an over/under shot of the Manatee and the Quicksilver boat, this time with far better results. The other snorkelers who arrived on the scene later proved to be very courteous and respectful of our photo opportunity but inevitably, with more people around, the Manatees began to disperse. There is really nothing for them to eat around Three Sisters, so they usually just sleep in the springs and then head out to forage for food during the day. By mid-morning they were gone and we were left with the memory of a very unique encounter with a gentle and playful marine mammal.

The Quicksilver inflatables were the perfect vessels to facilitate our Manatee adventure at Crystal River owing to their ease of assembly, comfort underway and convenience for getting into and out of the water. These same advantages serve diverse needs, whether for use as a dinghy or cruising local lakes and

ivers. I find Quicksilvers ideal for dive applications because they can handle a heavy load, are stable and it is so easy to roll off the side into the water. To re-board I usually slip off my tank and BC, loop a gauge over one of the built-in safety lines and lever myself back into the boat. Quicksilver describes their boats as portable, affordable fun—an assessment beyond dispute.

Quicksilver inflatables are available as Euro versions in 10 feet, 9 inch and 12 feet, 6 inch versions, while those designated as the sport version are available as follows:

QS 230: 7 feet, 6 inches, 70 pounds, recommended outboard, 5 hp max.

QS 270: 8 feet, 9 inches, 91 pounds, recommended outboard, 10 hp max.

QS 270 RIB: 8 feet, 9 inches, 100 pounds, rigid fiberglass hull with inflatable tubes, recommended outboard, 10 hp max.

QS 300: 9 feet, 9 inches, 97 pounds, recommended outboard, 15 hp max.

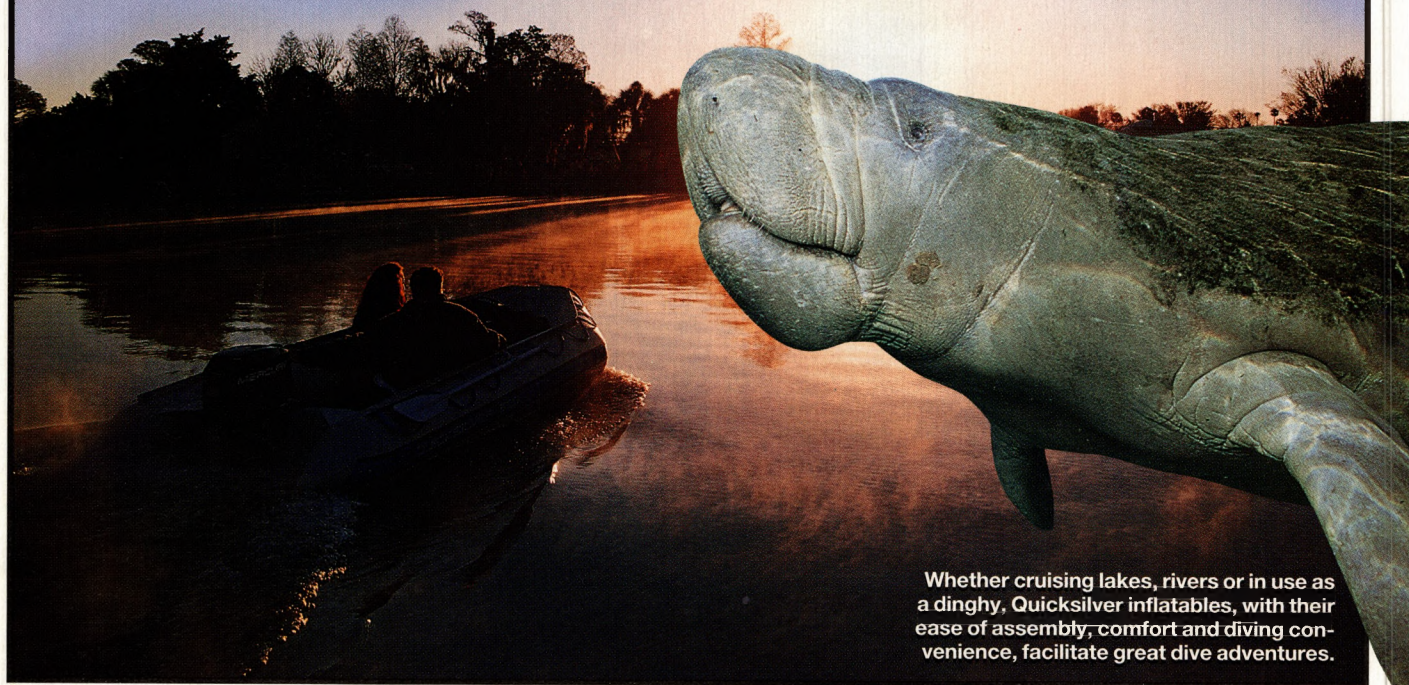
QS 300 RIB: 9 feet, 10 inches, 120 pounds, rigid fiberglass hull with inflatable tubes, recommended outboard, 15 hp max.

QS 330: 10 feet, 9 inches, 101 pounds, recommended outboard, 15 hp max.

QS 380: 12 feet, 6 inches, 160 pounds, recommended outboard, 25 hp max.

QS 430: 14 feet, 1 inch, 173 pounds, recommended outboard, 40 hp max.

For more information about Quicksilver inflatables, the name of your nearest dealer or to request a full color catalogue, phone (800) 552-3882 or write Mercury Marine, P.O. Box 1939, Fond Du Lac, WI 54336-1939. 🐬



Whether cruising lakes, rivers or in use as a dinghy, Quicksilver inflatables, with their ease of assembly, comfort and diving convenience, facilitate great dive adventures.

HENDERSON'S JERRY GARCIA SUITS


(Continued from Page 22)


While fleece does the job on the inside, the outer shell of a Polartec/Garcia garment helps repel both wind and water, making for an exceptionally warm piece of divewear. While diving, the water repellent features limit the amount of water that is exchanged within the suit, thereby providing far better insulation. Lycra suits, on the other hand, hold almost no water. The continual water exchange through a Lycra suit during a dive means your body is constantly reheating the water closest to your skin. You always lose heat in this exchange but, until Polartec, the only warm water alternative was neoprene. Topside, the Garcia suit's external wind/water repellent shell makes for comfortable boat trips, both before and after a dive. (No more freezing just because the wind is blowing.) Polartec has become the fabric of choice for all sorts of water-sport people: rafters, kayakers, water-skiers, snorkelers and divers.

In addition to the superior fabric and inherent "coolness" of the Garcia designer logo, you can also get a neoprene vest (to wear under the Polartec suit) that will help keep you warm when the water temperature starts dipping below 80°F. If you make three or more dives a day, you'll probably need a little bit more insulation in the torso area anyway.

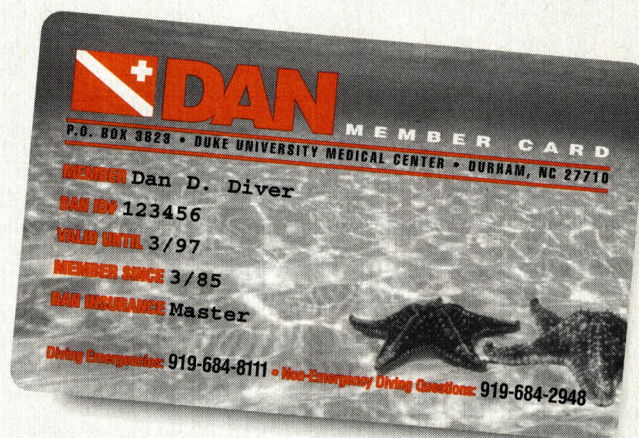
Remember, caloric loss during a dive, even a warm water one, is quite high. Often your body doesn't have enough reserves to keep you warm on that third dive of the day or late in the week of a multi-dive vacation!

Polartec is currently the hottest cool fabric in the diving world and its stretchability and durability far exceed any of the fabrics (Lycra, Darlexx) that have been the mainstays of recent years. With more than 100 dives and very little in the way of maintenance (except an occasional warm water rinse), my Garcia is holding up just fine, without the stretching usually associated with neoprene or Lycra garments of the same age and usage.

For more information regarding the Henderson/Garcia Polartec line, contact your dive retailer or Henderson at (609) 825-4771. The address is 301 Orange Street, Millville, NJ 08332; fax (609) 825-6378. 

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Left: Student tenders lower Farivar Rokni into the Christina River at ICDI's realistic, on campus low visibility river diving facility. Above: John Marinelli teaches Greg Collins topside welding techniques.

States, where certification is mandatory. He moved to Washington, DC, where he owned an auto repair business, before joining his fellow students at ICDI.

Shane, whose parents are U.S. citizens, graduated from school in Bangkok. He served a tour of duty in the U.S. Marine Corps and is an avid recreational scuba diver. Shane felt he could turn his love of diving into a promising career.

Radan served in the Navy branch of the Israeli Army and later worked as a scuba instructor before moving to France, where he taught hockey during the day and played the game at night. He also had a desire to earn his living in the world of commercial diving. He looked into diving schools in France but found them too expensive. He did exhaustive

Delaware's International Comm Complete State of the Art Training for

TEXT AND PHOTOGRAPHY BY HERB SEGARS

The commercial docks were abuzz with activity. Tugboats were being serviced for their next assignment, a U.S. Coast Guard buoy tender was hoisting a red bell buoy aboard and an oceangoing transport was being unloaded by a small army of dockworkers. Near the water's edge, Shane Clark, who was born in Bangkok, Thailand, was clad in a black drysuit ready to be fitted with a Superlite helmet. His tenders were Radan Reis, who hails from the outskirts of Haifa, Israel, and Farivar Rokni, whose home is in Tabriz, Iran. If there ever was an unlikely, multi-national trio, this was it. Their

common bond was a love of the water and the desire to become commercial divers. The three were students at the International Commercial Diving Institute (ICDI) in Wilmington, Delaware.

Farivar served in the Iranian Special Forces, worked as a VIP bodyguard and was an undercover policeman. He left his home country for Turkey, where he worked as a sponge diver, spending hours each day at depths between 40 and 70 feet. Although he loved this job, which required no formal training, Farivar knew there were more lucrative jobs within the boundaries of the United

research into commercial diving schools within the U.S. Radan's criteria was the same as Farivar and Shane. They wanted a school that was reasonably priced, could get them into the work force as quickly as possible and produced a quality commercial diver. They found all they were looking for on the banks of the Christina River.

The multi-national flavor at ICDI does not end with Shane, Farivar and Radan. This past April, ICDI conducted a three week familiarization course for four commercial divers from the former Soviet Union. They arrived, complete

with translator, to learn about the latest American equipment and commercial diving techniques.

ICDI's state of the art 12,000 square foot, heated indoor diving complex houses classrooms, a hyperbaric chamber, a topside welding area, indoor rigging areas, a 25,000 gallon and two 5,500 gallon high visibility diving tanks. Students learn equipment familiarization, an introduction to non-destructive testing inspection, mechanical equipment fabrication, practical rigging, hyperbaric chamber operation and mixed gas training. The school's newest addition is a topside underwater welding booth that resembles an incubator. Students practice underwater welding and cutting in this unit without getting wet.

At the rear of the school's campus is ICDI's realistic low visibility river diving facility on the Christina River. Students learn valve, flange and pipe assembly while dealing with 12 foot tidal changes and swift currents in visibility that ranges from limited to zero. Additionally, students mobilize quick response diving systems, perform remote location setups, hull inspections and bottom surveys at the Port of Wilmington. ICDI has worked hard to develop a working relationship with the City of Wilmington. Its success is evident as students are given the opportunity to perform hull inspections on the fire department's boats.

ICDI was founded by Bob and Kevin Johnson, along with their longtime friend, Dave Stoudt. Kevin, who is the vice president of ICDI, discussed the school's philosophy. "Our goal is to produce a diver who is ready to enter the work force. ICDI does this with an intensive 16 week training program, preparing students for ca-

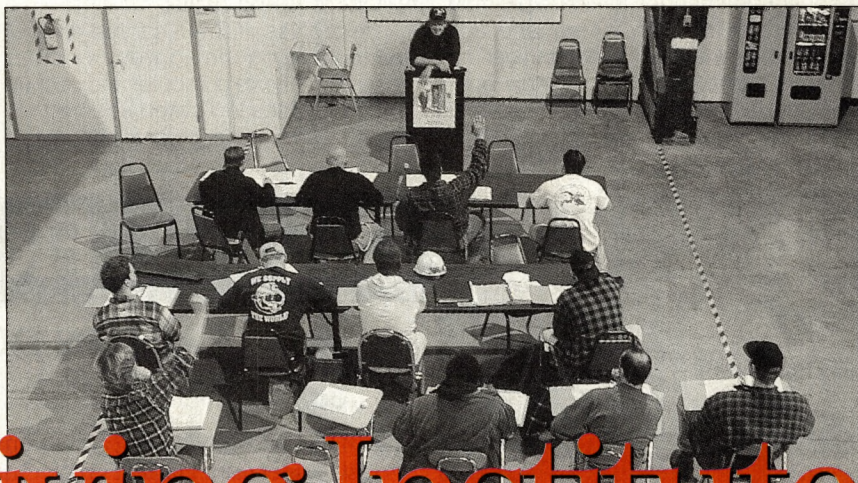
ence after graduation that make a commercial diver a great instructor. ICDI's instructor resumes read like a global road map, with such places as the North Sea, India, the Far East, the United Kingdom, the Gulf of Mexico, Puerto Rico, Norway, Holland, Denmark, Saudi Arabia and Bahrain. They draw on their real-life experiences to train entry level divers.

Dave Stoudt is the diving operations manager and instructor with 16 years of experience in oilfield diving. Dave went to commercial diving school in California when he was 18. He worked the offshore oilfields and did inland diving in the United Kingdom, worked on the Saudi-Bahrain Causeway, the Middle Eastern oilfields and the oil platforms of the North Sea. Dave's been to bridge inspector and non-destructive testing school, worked as a welding inspector, hyperbaric chamber manufacturer and was part of an underwater cutting team.

Phil Quirk teaches technical courses such as physics, physiology, medicine and mixed gases at ICDI. His back-
(Continued on Page 161)



Above: ICDI has three indoor high visibility diving tanks. Here, students watch Heath Houston practice liftbag techniques. Below: Students attend up to five hours of classroom lectures per day.

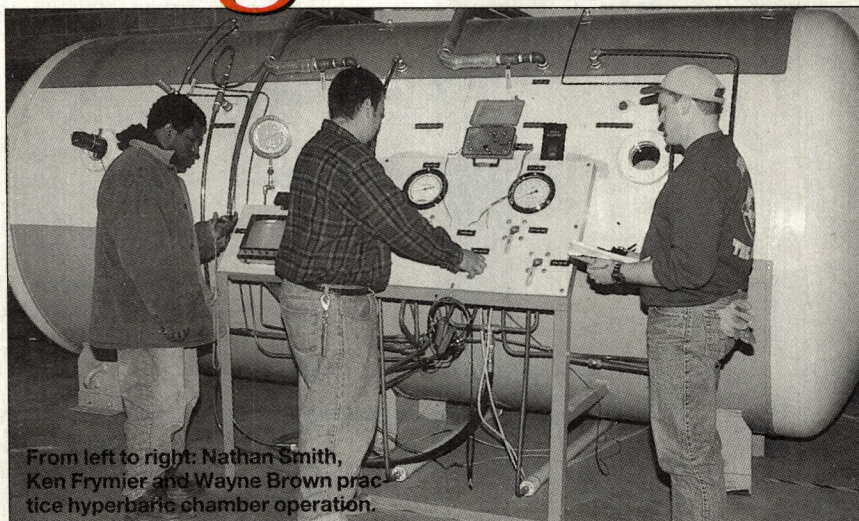


Commercial Diving Institute

a New Career

reers in inland-coastal and offshore oil-field diving." Kevin also felt the school should provide the best possible training at a reasonable cost. ICDI's courses are approved for veterans' training and students can receive approximately \$400 per month from the GI Montgomery Bill. ICDI also has an agreement with a housing complex to provide a fully furnished apartment for \$300 per month per student that includes most utilities.

The nucleus of ICDI is its instructors, each of whom started his career just like every ICDI student, at a commercial diving school. It is the years of practical experi-



From left to right: Nathan Smith, Ken Frymier and Wayne Brown practice hyperbaric chamber operation.

Avoiding DCS; More on Earthquakes

BY E.R. CROSS



Every diver should know that tables and computers will not reliably provide safe ascents from all dives under all conditions. In spite of progress made in the analysis of needs to prevent decompression sickness (DCS), there is still a 0.5 to 3 percent possibility of it happening after some dives. The human body is one of the most intricate electrochemical biological machines in existence. Nearly every tissue is different. Adding to this complexity is blood supply to the many tissues varies considerably. Also, subtle changes in tissue pH may play a part in the complex matter of uptake and elimination of breathing gases. Certainly stress, mostly physical but possibly psychological stress, too, can play a part in the rate and amount of saturation

and elimination of the diving breathing gas. Add to all of these biological details the many inconsistent environmental elements of a dive and it is little wonder the possibility of decompression sickness remains unpredictable.

In December 1995, Cheri Gilmore, an enthusiastic California scuba diver, wrote, "During the past month I spent 25 hours in a hyperbaric chamber for a diving accident. I had done three days of diving, three tanks per day with maximum depth of 85 feet and one hour surface interval between tanks." Cheri also stated she made slow ascents and safety stops at 30 and 15 feet.

The profiles of Cheri's three days of diving were on the aggressive side. However, her dive computer and backup no deco tables indicated she had remained within no decompression limits. I

also checked her dive profiles against other tables. Except for her 30 foot "safety stop," her ascents were within acceptable no decompression limits, provided she had ascended at the prescribed rate for the tables and computer she was using. So, what went wrong?

On a no decompression dive few, if any, tissues would be out-gassing at 30 feet—they would still be in-gassing. Cheri's 30 foot stop became part of her bottom time. When I entered this in one of my conservative tables, that extra three minutes of bottom time put Cheri's dive into decompression, with a required stop of several minutes at ten feet. The consensus of diving physiologists who work with decompression tables and procedures is safety stops should be made between 10 to 20 feet just before

(Continued on Page 163)



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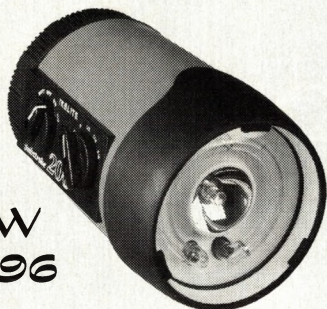


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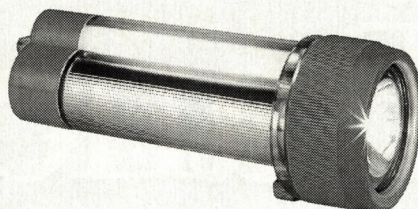
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Audible ready signal	Yes
Modeling light	Yes
LED film gauge	Yes



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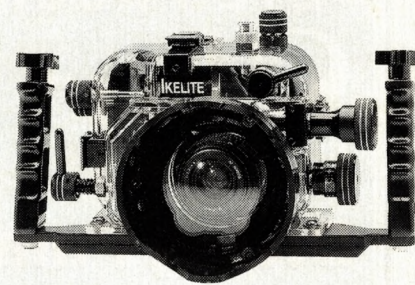
Two Lights in One.

The Mini C-Fluorescent combines a halogen lamp and reflector with the gentle illumination of a fluorescent lamp. The halogen lamp provides a spot beam to illuminate distant objects night or day.

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The 4 alkaline C-cells provide a burn time of 6 hours for the halogen and 15 hours for the fluorescent. A separate switch operates the halogen and fluorescent lamps.

The Mini C-Fluorescent is virtually indestructible with a 300' depth rating.



SLR-AF HOUSINGS

Choose a favorite camera – Nikon, Canon, Minolta or Pentax.

Then choose the housing that affords full underwater use of the 35mm SLR-AF camera's versatile features and supports a full line of underwater photographic accessories. A simple glance through any part of the clear housing assures the system is safe and allows a clear view of all the camera information and controls. Interchangeable port system accepts a full range of lenses. The light-weight housings are definitely a plus when transporting and are near-neutral buoyancy with the camera and tray. Injection molded from a high-strength polycarbonate provides a safe working depth of 200 feet (60m).



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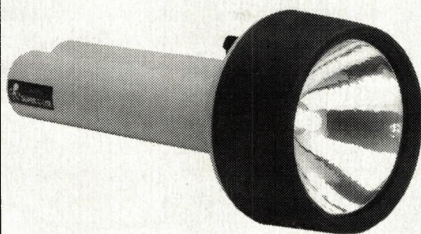
The Aquashot II is Ikelite's waterproof housing for the 35mm, single-use Kodak and Fuji 27-exposure cameras. This inexpensive system is ideal for diving and snorkeling. The results are sharp, colorful photos rivaling those taken by the expensive underwater cameras. Use the flash version cameras to bring out the vivid underwater colors. Aquashot II housing operates to 125 feet.

With the film's fine grain, you get beautiful color prints and enlargements. Accessories available:

Macro Kit—which allows shooting underwater subjects at 8 inches.

Substrobe AQ/S—which helps eliminate backscatter.

Travel Bag—durable nylon with shoulder strap and protective foam interior.

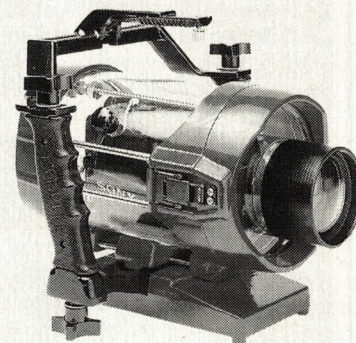


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The Super C-Lite Hx is Ikelite's brightest alkaline hand held diving light. The extended Super-C body accepts six c-cells to power the brighter 7.5 volt halogen lamp for 6 hours. The large reflector produces a concentrated spot beam, ideal for use in bright or dark, clear water.

The Super C-Lite Hx features a unique folding on/off switch with spring loaded lock to prevent accidental use. Nickel plated contacts boost electrical efficiency and are more corrosion resistant. A rubber shroud protects the front lens. Easy opening is assured and the casing is virtually indestructible with a depth rating of 300' (90m).



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Use your video camera to capture the exciting world of diving to share with family and friends.

Ikelite offers the largest selection of stock video housings for Sony, JVC and Panasonic camcorders. A simple glance through any part of the clear housing assures the system is safe by providing instant visual inspection of the camcorder and complete monitoring of all functions.

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PETER HUGHES'

Sun Dancer

Diving Palau in Style



TEXT AND PHOTOGRAPHY BY AL HORNSBY

About the nicest group of people you'll ever meet, running about the most comfortable live-aboard vessel you'll ever see, in about the most fantastic dive location you'll ever discover.

There are many ways to describe a dive vacation aboard Peter Hughes' *Sun Dancer* but perhaps that's the best way to start. The *Sun Dancer* experience is one that insists on superlatives; weaker words simply could not do it justice.

First, let your imagination go to Palau, in western Micronesia. Regarded as one of the diving wonders of the world, this immense and varied dive destination has virtually everything one could ask for. There is beautiful topside scenery, with green-topped rock islands scattered across a huge turquoise lagoon. There are high voltage wall dives, with swarms of sharks, schools of Barracuda and ocean pelagics such as Wahoo and Dogtooth Tuna. There are drift dives through reef passes, with huge schools of snappers and jacks, Mantas and cruising sea turtles. If you want more, there are delicate coral gardens, with many species of corals, gorgonians and invertebrates such as shrimp, snails and crabs, along with virtually every colorful reef tropical imaginable. And, if all this were not enough, there are even World War II shipwrecks, full of relics and teeming with fish and other marine creatures.

Next, think of a vessel that has comfort as its watchword. One hundred twenty feet long, with three decks, it is devoted to accommodating only 16 guests, along with a crew of seven. For a live-aboard, *Sun Dancer* offers unique amenities. Each cabin, whether stateroom, single or double, enjoys an ocean view through a huge picture window, giving a feeling of roominess, airiness and space seldom found aboard a ship of any size. Private baths, individual air-conditioning controls and coffee delivered room service style in the morning are additional examples of that special touch.

Because *Sun Dancer's* goal is to create the feeling of a first class resort, the attention to guests' comfort does not stop there. The beds are all either full sized twins, queens or kings—there are no ship sized bunkbeds on *Sun Dancer*! And, each clean, modern bathroom is stocked with lotions, shampoos and other convenient toiletry items.

But there's more. Upon returning from a dive, can you imagine being met at the ship's ladder by a crew member offering you a hot towel? Then, being able to slip into a fuzzy terrycloth robe (yours for the trip), just in time for the next meal? Well, that is the *Sun Dancer* experience.

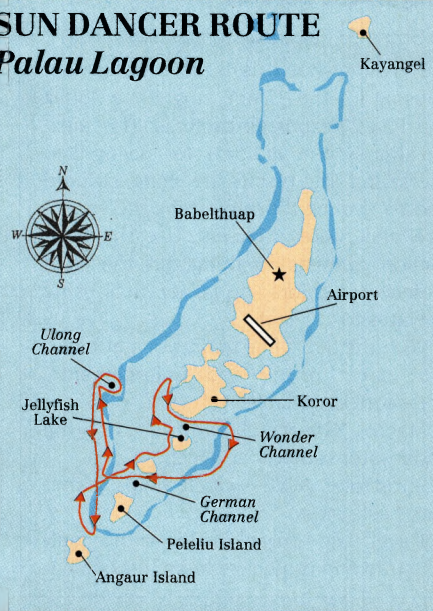
The result of all this is that *Sun Dancer*, by design, is one of the

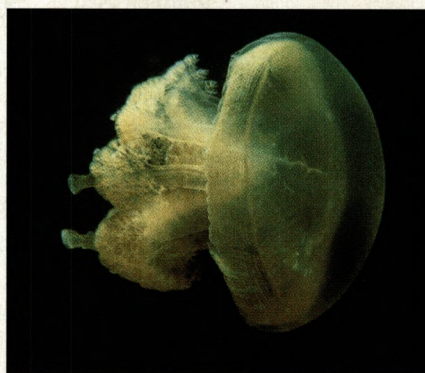
few live-aboards anywhere that can cater even to nondiver spouses and to divers who simply aren't experienced boat people.

When it comes to food, chef Steve Knopf, a graduate of New York's French Culinary Institute, makes each

The 120 foot long *Sun Dancer* (above) transports 16 guests to Palau's exhilarating dive sites. Both seven and ten day itineraries are offered. Shown below is a sample route from a seven day itinerary.

SUN DANCER ROUTE Palau Lagoon





Left: A *Mastigias* Jellyfish looms out of the darkness of Jellyfish Lake. Far left: A giant orange gorgonian fans the clear blue water at Ngemelis Wall—a spectacular dive site, especially after dark. Below: The *Sun Dancer's* incredibly friendly crew members.



meal a special treat. Individually prepared breakfasts, hot buffet luncheons and served, four course dinners—with complimentary wines and other beverages—exhibit an astonishing level of live-aboard dining quality and imagination. The range of foods is very surprising, especially considering the remote location. Chef Steve has put together a menu that can rival land based restaurants; nouveau styles, Italian, Oriental, even a touch of local Micronesia—all prepared distinctively by someone who obviously enjoys the profession.

As for the diving, *Sun Dancer* may be Peter Hughes' best example of attention to detail for convenience and efficiency. The aft one-half of the ship's main deck is devoted to diving operations. Benches with individual storage spaces line the sides, just across from the areas for hanging wetsuits. A large two level camera prep station is directly adjacent the dive tender ladder and the camera rinse bin and charging station is only a step away. This means there is no need to carry camera equipment back and forth from the cabins. There is ample storage and set-up space on the dive deck, where it's most convenient. After dives, photographers merely drop their film into a development box for daily E-6 processing.

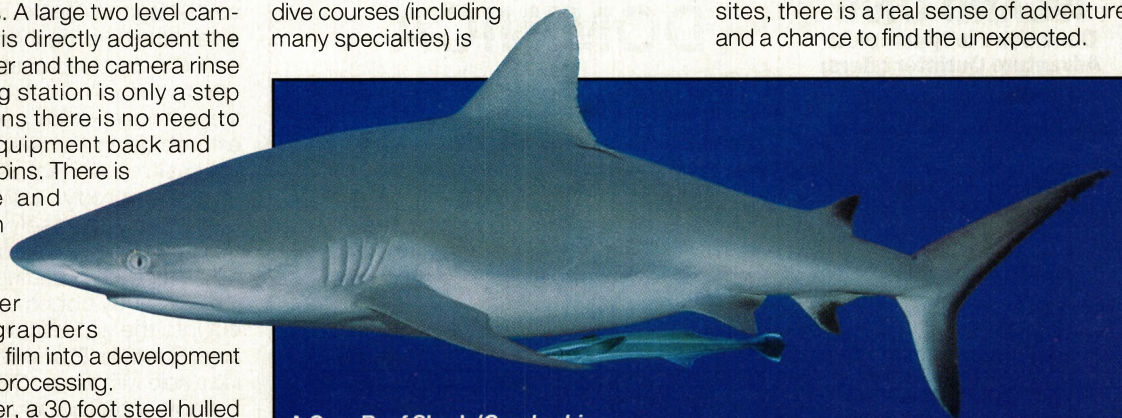
The dive tender, a 30 foot steel hulled jet drive known as "the Bus," is an even greater innovation. A seat, a storage space below and a tank rack is reserved

for each guest. The equipment stays in place throughout the trip; suiting up and getting into the water is as simple as sitting down, fastening buckles and back rolling off the side. Designed for rough water, the Bus gives *Sun Dancer's* dive program a great range and flexibility. At 30 plus knots top speed, it is able to quickly reach even those dive sites that are distant from the mothership's calm water anchorages. After diving, there is ample water, juice and soft drinks and a hotwater shower to soothe any *après* dive chill. Tanks are filled by the crew after each of the up to five dives scheduled every day; guests do not have to move or assemble any dive gear in prep for the next dive—it's all been taken care of.

The dive guides, Frank Ladner, Jessica Brungard and Betty Almogy are all PADI instructors; a full range of dive courses (including many specialties) is

available. For those who want souvenirs of their time aboard *Sun Dancer*, personalized videos and underwater photographs are available upon request.

And, finally, there's the diving that has made Palau famous. Without question, a live-aboard broadens the experience. Not only are Palau's major sites available but there are also numerous lesser known (but equally fantastic) sites within short runs of *Sun Dancer's* normal anchorages. Beyond this, for ten day cruises, guests can decide, weather permitting, to engage in exploratory dives south as far as the island of Angaur and north to the seldom dived islands of Kayangel and Velasco. The uncharted reefs in these remote regions are full of surprises—schooling Hammerheads and other large marine animals among them. As the goal of the trips is to chart new dive sites, there is a real sense of adventure and a chance to find the unexpected.



A Gray Reef Shark (*Carcharhinus amblyrhynchos*) cruises the edge of the drop-off at Blue Corner.

SUN DANCER

Perhaps the most outrageous of these dives is at the southern end of Palau Lagoon, off the tip of Peleliu Island. Like many places where currents converge, **Peleliu Corner** is a dramatic, action-packed site that is as exciting as they come. A steep, vertical wall drops from about 45 feet into deep water, with crevices, overhangs, cuts and ledges creating a rough, dramatic vista. Huge fans, sponges and soft corals cling to the

face and long seaweeds snake out from the coralline surface. And, everywhere there are fish. There are massive schools of jacks, Surgeonfish and snappers. Huge Yellow Groupers, three to four feet long, meander in and out of the wall's grottos. Dogtooth Tuna and schools of Barracuda are just out in deeper water. And, never out of sight, a congregation of Gray Reef Sharks patrols the edge of the drop-off, moving in and out in deliberate, circular patterns, occasionally joined by bizarre looking Scalloped Hammerheads. This is diving at its best, its most prolific and most exciting!

Palau's other favorite spot, of course, is famed **Blue Corner**. On the ocean side of Ngemelis Island, this has been Palau's trademark dive for many years—and for good reason. At a place on the drop-off where the reef comes to a narrow point in 45 feet of water, divers remain stationary in the current while an undersea parade streams by. A resident school of Blackfin Barracuda circles and shimmers in the sunlight streaming through the clear water. A huge school of Horse-eye Jacks, tightly packed in a boiling, silvery mass, moves up and down the wall face. Ten, 20, 30 Gray Reef Sharks patrol the edge of the drop like a pack of wolves. And, if a dive site needed any more to rank as fantastic, there's a three foot long resident Napoleon Wrasse, curious and unafraid of divers, who comes in close, giving everyone a calm once-over with large, rolling eyes.

One of *Sun Dancer's* special dives, off the regular beaten track, is known as **Ngerchong Corner**. On the lagoon's east side, at the tip of Ngerchong Island, this site features a combination of shark action and what is undoubtedly one of Palau's most exquisite coral gardens. A sloping wall that starts in about 40 feet of water, Ngerchong Corner is thick with red gorgonian bushes, purple and cream colored soft corals and a number of huge orange seafans. In the very clear water, hard corals are delicate and profuse. Schools of unusual Checkered Snappers and vermillion Goggle-eyes meander about the reef face, offering unusual photographic opportunities. As with other Palau dive sites, there is also a resident pack of Gray Reef Sharks that cruises just out from the wall. Occasionally, the very special occurs and a nine foot long Great Hammerhead makes a brief appearance before vanishing again into deep water.

Just off Carp Island, there's another beautiful spot, known as **Turtle Cove Blue Hole**. An inner lagoon dive, the reef's point juts into the huge channel that carries the main tidal flow in and out of the central lagoon. On the shallow reef flat, a small blue hole meanders down to open on the reef's steep outer wall. Thousands and thousands of fish congregate; at times, a huge, resident school of snappers extends down the reefline for hundreds of yards. Unicornfish are also present in huge numbers, not only cruising about but often seen massed closely together, ten or more at a time, at cleaning stations, carefully attended by darting cleaner wrasse. On the sandy bottom of several grottos cut into the wall's face live a number of large Randall's Prawn Gobies, each sharing a hole with a busy Olivaceous Prawn.

Another of *Sun Dancer's* special dives is **Ngemelis Wall**, after dark. Ngemelis is one of Palau's most popular, best known dive sites but after dark it takes on an entirely new look. Without a doubt, this is

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one of diving's most spectacular night dives. The steep wall is practically covered with orange and yellow *Tubastrea* Corals, soft corals of many colors and red and orange gorgonians, all with feeding tentacles extended. The result is a vertical wonderland of blazing colors that comes alive under a flashlight's beam.

Sun Dancer features seven and ten day excursions and a special package in cooperation with Manta Ray Divers and the Manta Ray Bay Hotel in Yap. Guests spend three days diving with Yap's famed Mantas, then fly onto Palau for a 10 day *Sun Dancer* excursion. All *Sun Dancer* packages include a first and last night at the luxurious Palau Pacific Resort.

Guests fly to Palau via Honolulu and Guam on Continental Micronesia with reg-



ular flights and easy connections. To experience *Sun Dancer's* Palau, call (800) 9-DANCER—a real adventure is waiting. 🐟

DAN OFFERS UP TO \$125,000 DIVE ACCIDENT COVERAGE

Divers Alert Network (DAN), diving's nonprofit safety association, now offers its members \$125,000 insurance coverage through its Master Plan dive accident program. In addition, all members now receive \$100,000 evacuation assistance as an automatic benefit of membership. This is nearly \$250,000 of coverage—more than double DAN's original policy limits for the same price.

"This is the best protection offered by any dive accident program in the scuba industry," says Barry Shuster, DAN's director of marketing. "When you consider the affordability and value of the program and that medical experts are available 24 hours a day at Duke University Medical Center to coordinate treatment, evacuation and insurance for injured divers, you have to wonder why a diver would choose another insurance program."

DAN members also receive a free subscription to Alert Diver, DAN's award winning magazine dedicated to dive safety and health, and a free copy of the DAN Dive and Travel Medical Guide. Membership is only \$25 per year. The Master Plan program is only \$35 per year.

"DAN supports the entire dive industry, including training and funding for hyperbaric chambers around the world. No one does as much for divers," says Shuster.

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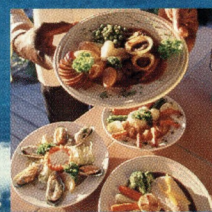
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SKIN DIVER JUNE 1996 39

What does it take to earn PADI's select new Career Development Center designation? It takes excellence in education, a prestigious reputation in the dive industry and many years of certifying highly qualified dive instructors.

But, all of this is nothing new to Dave Inman, founder and owner of Divers Unlimited, a PADI Five Star instructor training facility in Hollywood, Florida. Inman began training divers even before there were established certifying agencies. As the industry has developed and changed, Inman's wealth of experience and innovative ideas have been a major influence, shaping career training as well as recreational diving. And now, in 1996, his facility is once again on the forefront, having one of just seven training programs worldwide qualifying for PADI's coveted Career Development Center (CDC) title.

At the present time, potential candidates for PADI's instructor certification must have completed at least 100 dives and been certified for one year before

Right: Instructor Preparatory students practice teaching buddy breathing skills. Below: The *Diversion*, Divers Unlimited's custom dive boat, gives students access to some of Florida's best reefs and wrecks.



qualifying for the final Instructor Evaluation (IE) exam. But, for Career Development Centers, that minimum has been reduced to six months of experience and 60 dives. The CDC rating indicates that a training facility is recognized as specializing in career training with an emphasis on the type of continuing education that will prepare the candidate well beyond basic instructor certification to the level of real world skills. The CDC is required to have at least two course directors on staff, a well established and comprehensive continuing education program beyond the IDC and a certain level of experience in qualifying candidates for the instructor rating.

Qualifying for this prestigious position was a natural next step for Inman's training program. For years, this career development school has been showered with awards and recognition for excellence in education. In 1994, Divers Unlimited became the first training institution to receive PADI's Outstanding Achievement Award for contributions to the growth



Divers

Jumpstart Your Dive Career at this New PADI CDC

TEXT AND PHOTOGRAPHY BY SHIRLEY VANDERBILT

and advancement of the dive industry. For three years running, the school was named PADI's number one training facility in the USA. And in 1993, it was recognized with the Cousteau Award. Divers Unlimited continues to be the recipient of numerous certificates of recognition for excellence from PADI's quality assurance department, with nine of these certificates awarded in 1994 alone. As Inman points out, an institution's reputation is established through years of dedication, not by overnight success or financial clout. And Divers Unlimited has a proven history as a leader and innovator in the field of diving.

What does all of this mean to the potential instructor candidate? Not only do you need to be concerned about the quality of training you receive as you progress through your Instructor Development Course (IDC) but also the reputation you'll have once you have been awarded your instructor rating. Having made the commitment to an exciting and rewarding career in recreational diving,

the next step is assessing your qualifications to enter a training program, your location preference and your marketability upon completion of your training.

With Divers Unlimited's new CDC status, you won't have to wait to get a headstart on your new career. Nondivers may even begin their basic open water training here; but keep in mind you'll still need a full six months of experience before qualifying for the final IE no matter how quickly you move through training. And, when you successfully complete your instructor training and the final evaluation, you'll still need a year's experience and 100 dives before PADI officially certifies you to teach. However, there are several options open to you while you are accumulating your experience. One is Divers Unlimited's continuing education track, the Gold Instructor Program; another is immediate employment in the dive industry, where you may gain experience while awaiting your full instructor credentials.

Once you have completed your open water and advanced open water certification, you're ready to enter Divers Un-

limited's Triad program, a three step process that may take you from basic training through preparation for the IE in as little as four weeks. The Rescue Diver course emphasizes diving first aid, accident management and diving equipment. A companion course, the Medic First Aid, completes the skills required for your PADI Rescue Diver rating. From here you'll proceed to nine days of divemaster training, including classroom, pool and open water sessions. Going beyond the standard divemaster curriculum, Divers Unlimited also includes Tank Hydrostatic Testing and Compressed Air Systems. These special areas of expertise provide you with critical technical knowledge not usually provided in career schools and set you apart as a valuable asset in the job market.

Next you move on to the Instructor Preparatory course. This is not required but highly recommended. Candidates who participate in the prep course generally perform better and with more confidence throughout the IDC and IE. The

real world of diving. The program includes pool and open water sessions as well as individual counseling sessions to review your progress.

Immediately following the IDC, PADI's IE is scheduled in Ft. Lauderdale, allowing you to complete your final evaluation while your skills and fund of information are still fresh in your mind and your confidence is high. Once you've completed the IE, you're ready for Divers Unlimited's all important Gold Program. Of course, you may end your training here if you so desire but in the current job market you may also be ending your marketability. It is becoming increasingly important for newly certified instructors to enhance their teaching skills with a variety of other talents acquired through post-graduate work.

The Gold Instructor Program prepares you to work in any area of the dive industry, whether in a resort, live-aboard, cruise ship or retail setting. In many of these career settings you'll be required to know the intricacies of compressor maintenance

tors who know how to fill tanks, repair equipment, handle emergencies and tie up the boat. And, your extra advantage will be your unique Divers Unlimited training with the compressor. You'll come to know the sound, smell and look of the machine and be alerted to potential problems before they become unmanageable, a critical skill in many island resort settings.

Your course work completed and certifications in hand, you're ready to embark upon your new career. By this time you've probably already been in touch with potential employers through Divers Unlimited's extensive network of successful graduates. The school's free placement program is available to you throughout your career, with assistance in resume preparation and a listing of hundreds of jobs around the world.

Above and beyond Divers Unlimited's excellent reputation and prestigious status among career training schools, there's the quality of the school's location. Hollywood, just outside Ft. Lauderdale, is in the heart of some of Florida's best dive sites. Local reefs and wrecks, accessible to students on the shop's custom dive boat *Diversion*, feature great diversity of marine life and diving conditions. Within a few hours' drive, you also have access to North America's only living coral reef system—in the Florida Keys—and in the opposite direction, an extensive network of limestone caverns and freshwater springs in central Florida. Divers Unlimited is the only dive operator allowed within the 284 square miles of the Biscayne National Park near Miami, a unique nature sanctuary accessible only by boat.

Along the coastline, water temperatures range from the mid 70s (°F) in winter to the 80s in summer. The clear waters of the Gulf Stream run not far from shore, bringing many migratory species. Florida is known as the Sunshine State, so you'll likely experience great weather during your training.

Divers Unlimited's 8,000 square foot complex is convenient to moderately priced motels and apartments, shopping and restaurants. The facility includes retail and rental services, equipment repair center, classrooms and administrative offices, and the latest in training equipment and library resources. Pool sessions take place in an Olympic-sized heated pool, with changing facilities, near Divers Unlimited. Divers Unlimited career counselors are available on a tollfree line to answer your questions or provide you with an information packet. In the U.S. and Canada, call (800) 289-3483, in Florida call (305) 981-0156 or fax your request to (305) 963-5255. You may also direct inquiries by mail to Divers Unlimited, 6023 Hollywood Boulevard, Hollywood, FL 33024. 

Unlimited



Divers Unlimited's students have access to an Olympic sized pool near the campus.

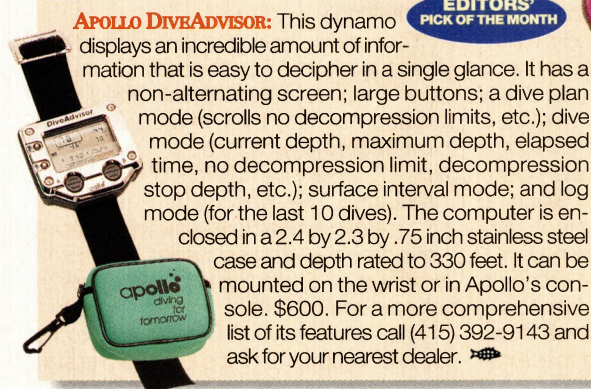
prep course gives you a headstart on lesson preparation and delivery practice sessions, easing the anxiety some less experienced candidates may be feeling. And, students are provided an opportunity for academic review for the IE, not included in the IDC, where the emphasis is on learning to teach what you already know.

The seven day IDC is taught by highly qualified course directors who offer not only their technical acumen but also the benefit of their years of experience in the

and trouble shooting, boat operations, resort course instruction, underwater photography and camera maintenance, and more. These skills, along with Medic First Aid Instructor and Master Scuba Diver Trainer, are just a portion of what you'll learn in your postgraduate studies. You'll leave with certificates to teach up to one-half dozen specialties as well as nitrox and DAN oxygen. Divided into three basic components, the Gold Program is a good investment for your future, enhancing your resume by preparing you for a multitude of real world tasks. This will give you the edge with employers who want instruc-

SDM Editors Pick Items That Make Diving Safer, Easier and More Fun!

BY TY SAWYER AND TAMARA COLLINS
PHOTOGRAPHY BY BONNIE J. CARDONE



APOLLO DIVE ADVISOR: This dynamo displays an incredible amount of information that is easy to decipher in a single glance. It has a non-alternating screen; large buttons; a dive plan mode (scrolls no decompression limits, etc.); dive mode (current depth, maximum depth, elapsed time, no decompression limit, decompression stop depth, etc.); surface interval mode; and log mode (for the last 10 dives). The computer is enclosed in a 2.4 by 2.3 by .75 inch stainless steel case and depth rated to 330 feet. It can be mounted on the wrist or in Apollo's console. \$600. For a more comprehensive list of its features call (415) 392-9143 and ask for your nearest dealer.

EDITORS' PICK OF THE MONTH



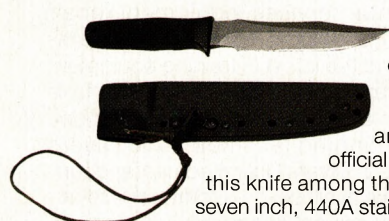
TUSA IMPREX DIVE SLIPPERS: If thick boots are too much for the deliciously warm waters you dive in, you need to slip into something more comfortable. Tusa offers the DS-2100Z dive slippers for just that occasion. The thin, 3mm neoprene provides a minimum amount of warmth, while the compression molded soles provide maximum protection and traction. As you would expect, they slip on easily, have glued and exterior sewn seams for comfort and durability and are finished with soft nylon seam tape. \$38 in fluorescent pink, black or cobalt blue. Call (310) 498-3708 for the address of your nearest local dealer.

AQUA DOLLY TRANSPORTER II: Well, here's a gearbag that actually lives up to its billing—the TranSporter II. For easy towing, its two big wheels will handle a variety of surfaces. The 840 denier fabric is made to withstand rugged treatment. The upper section detaches. All in all the TranSporter II contains more than 11,000 cubic inches of storage—enough for all your gear, including your tank! All this equals less pain and less work for only \$198. For more information call (800) 711-DIVE.



SEAWARE SEAHAULER CASE: This solid, heavy duty dive bag will see your gear through the

abuse of diving and baggage handlers for years to come. The bottom of the 30 by 14 by 15 inch case is made of a super strong 18 ounce fabric. The remainder is a double laminated ballistics material that is abrasion resistant. The lockable zippers are double stitched and reinforced. The handles (four in all; two join in the center with a touch-fastening closure) are also reinforced. Padded zip-out dividers protect, separate and organize all your goodies on the inside. \$139.95. Call (800) 455-5668 for the name of your nearest dealer.



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KNIFE-2000: This is the only dive knife sanctioned by the U.S. Navy SEALs. An elite knife by any definition, the SEAL official stamp of approval ranks this knife among the best in the world. The seven inch, 440A stainless steel blade is coated with a gray, scratch resistant powder and has superior sharpness, edge retention, blade breaking strength and toughness. This 12 1/4 inch knife has been more rigorously tested than any other piece of equipment you're likely to wear. Whether you're storming the beach under the clamorous glare of CNN lights or peacefully wending your way through the kelp this \$152.95 knife will perform beyond expectations. For the location of your nearest dealer call (206) 771-6230.

500 PSI SALT-AWAY: The product designers at 500 PSI are also divers and they have dealt with the corrosive effects of saltwater. To battle this threat to diving equipment they designed and personally tested (500 PSI never tests its products on animals) Salt-Away, a biodegradable, nontoxic formula that removes salt deposits. Spray Salt-Away on knives, instruments, buckles, inflators, zippers, valves, regulators, hoses, swivels, camera housings and lights and rinse with fresh water to totally remove salt deposits. The four ounce spray bottle is available for \$6.95. Call 500 PSI at (800) 221-0889 for the address of your nearest dealer.



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1,000 Reasons to Dive The Bahamas



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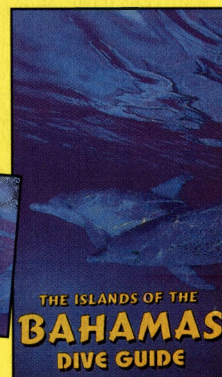
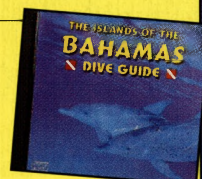
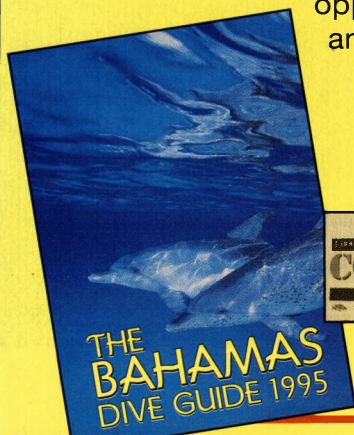
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DISCOVER OUR DIVERSITY

Belize's Manta Resort

Scuba Paradise Found on Glover's Reef

TEXT AND PHOTOGRAPHY BY RICK FREHSEE

A sunny, cloudless sky and a crystal sea. Mammoth, wilderness reefs and quaint, comfortable cottages nestled on a palm-crowded, beachy tropical isle. There are many definitions of paradise; for scuba divers, this is certainly one of them. On the way to a world-class diving adventure, I found a bonus, lovely Manta Resort on the nearly mystical coral ramparts of Glover's Reef.

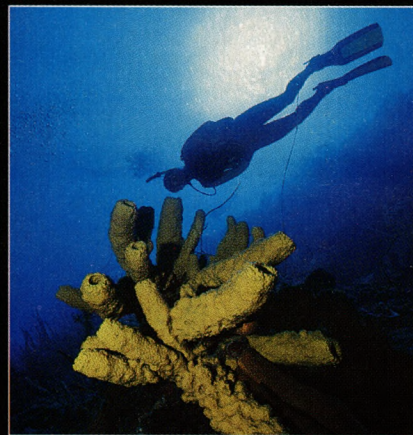
Getting here used to be an adventure all by itself. This is not your neighboring reef next to a nearby village five minutes from the airport. This is Glover's Reef. Of the huge and unique atolls of Belize, this is the farthest from Belize City (nearly 80 miles) and, therefore, the least visited and least known of the three coral rings off the coast. Today, getting here is a breeze or at least a brisk boat ride. What used to be a five hour partially open ocean crossing is now a comfortable two hour and 15 minute trip in the 55 foot *Pelagic*, the new twin diesel transfer vessel that looks and performs like a practical ocean yacht. Owing in part to our first report on Manta Resort, our boat and resort were full this trip—26 of the happiest divers you could ever meet.

Owing to sheer luck, several of the couples aboard were with us on our visit last year. Some of us were returning to what we already knew was go-

ing to be wonderful diving and a unique resort experience. The new divers were in for a treat; the opening line on one of their post cards read: "I've found paradise."

First of all, consider the setting; it's ready made for a tropical dream. At the southwestern corner of Glover's Reef Atoll is a pair of islands, both low, sandy and covered with royal palms. Manta Resort is a series of wooden cottages, spaced for view and privacy at the edge of the sea on the southwesternmost isle. Between the two islands is one of the prettiest, most tropical views in all Belize—a crystal emerald lagoon sandwiched by beach and palms. On the horizon to the south is a fringe of low whitecaps, where the sea meets the golden fringing reefs. The sun rises and

Above: The soft glow of orange through a palm studded beach marks the ending of another unforgettable day on the mystical coral ramparts of Glover's Reef Atoll.



Above: At Hole in the Wall giant corals and sponges reveal themselves in a continuous underwater cavalcade, each more magnificent than the one before. Left: The quaint, comfortable cottages of Manta Resort are nestled in royal palms facing the crystal blue sea.



sets over swaying palms. The resort focal point is a charming, thatched roof restaurant and lounge suspended in the lagoon and reached via a wooden pier. A cluster of medium sized outboard powered dive boats is docked at the restaurant and pier mounted dive and wet storage shop. In addition to a few small staff and support buildings, the only other significant structures on the 12 acre isle are a dock for *Pelagic* and a rotunda-style stilt-mounted two family suite.

Belize, a tiny country with both a Central American and a tropical island flavor, faces the Caribbean Sea. Twelve to 15 miles offshore is the most continuous stretch (170 miles) of the longest barrier reef in the Eastern Hemisphere. Farther out are three distinctive coral atolls, each a universe in itself. In between, 1,000 tropical isles hover in transparent seas. This combination presents one of the most spectacular and extensive dive environments in the New World Tropics.

Glover's Reef is Belize's wilderness atoll. Seventeen miles long and 13 miles wide, it is a chunk of pure nature, most of which is below the sea. The 81 square mile area within the oval of reefs provides a pedestal for more than 700 patch reefs. Along the outer ring,

the atoll's only small slices of real estate. This is a vista of sea and sky and a few groves of palms, nearly unblemished by the hand of man. Very few boats visit Glover's Reef on a regular basis. There is a good chance that if you are here for a week, you will never see a boat other than from the resort. Nearly the only sign of civilization is Manta Resort.

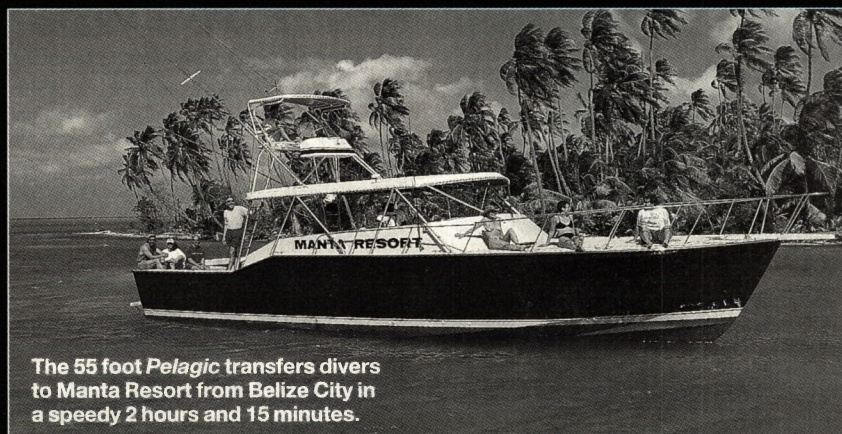
Living on a secluded tropical island allows rest, relaxation and an uncommon personal experience. When it is colored by a good dive operation, excellent food and a few fun friends, it becomes an unforgettable interlude. The day begins, if you are up early (most of us are in bed by 10:00 pm),

usual schedule is two single tank boat dives in the morning and one in the afternoon (around 2:30). Boat night dives are scheduled periodically during the week.

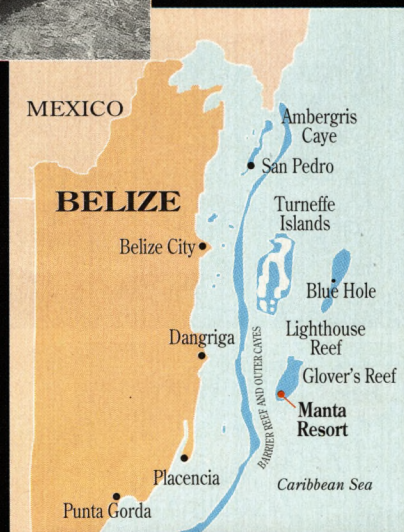
All meals are served in the Manta Lagoon Restaurant and Driftwood Bar. Lunch and dinner are always something special. For dinner there is a choice of two entrees, usually seafood, steak or chicken. Desserts are sumptuous and wine is served with the evening meal. After the evening dive your time is your own. Resting, reading, sunning, swimming, snorkeling or canoeing are always available. Optional fishing trips can be arranged on the flats for Bonefish or Permit or



Several 26 foot twin outboards scuttle divers to the innumerable unblemished sites along Glover's almost solid ring of fringing reefs. The longest normal run is 15 minutes.



The 55 foot *Pelagic* transfers divers to Manta Resort from Belize City in a speedy 2 hours and 15 minutes.



huge golden corals tumble toward a series of pinnacles, towers and walls at the drop-off.

Glover's is an almost solid ring of fringing reefs, interrupted by a few narrow inlets and accented by a handful of low tropical isles. Long Cay Cut and West Cut are typical of the passes through the reef allowing access to and from the inside of the atoll. There are no real islands at the northern end of the atoll. Toward the southern end is Northwest Caye, Long Caye, Middle Caye and the two Southwest Cayes,

with a golden sun rising over the sister island. Breakfast (eggs, omelettes, pancakes, etc.) precedes an 8:30 am departure at the docks.

The boats are uncrowded and fast—several nearly identical 26 foot twin outboards with side seats and a center tank console. Trips to the nearby reefs are often three to five minutes. The longest "normal" runs to dive sites are about 15 minutes. The dive area presents about 30 known sites all along the southern, eastern and western edges of the atoll. The

out on the deep blue for Wahoo, Marlin or Sailfish. Social life at night is what you make of it; the only schedule is diving and meals, both of which can be adjusted with minor variations by a visiting group.

The diving environment, as might be expected, is a nearly pure, virgin wilderness. What might not be expected is the range of diversity. Although my preference is the outer walls, there is a great variety of depth, bottom cover and type of coral forma-

(Continued on Page 97)

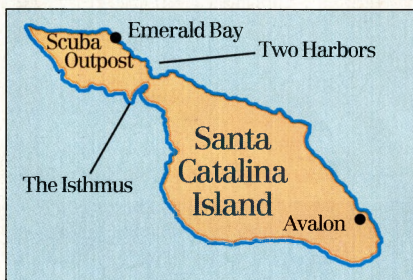
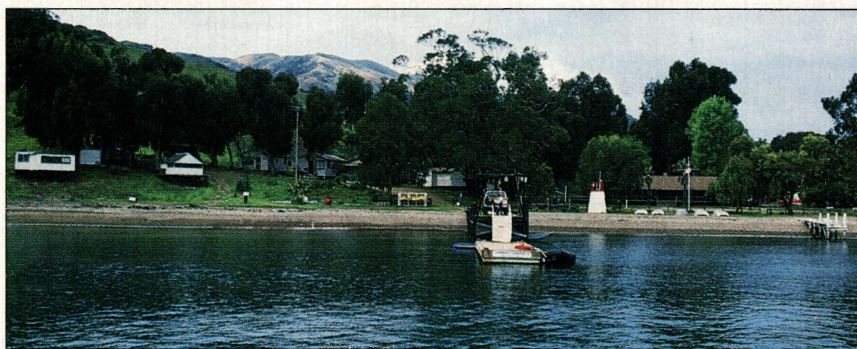
Scuba Outpost, at Santa Catalina Island's remote west end, is reachable only by boat and a one lane dirt road.



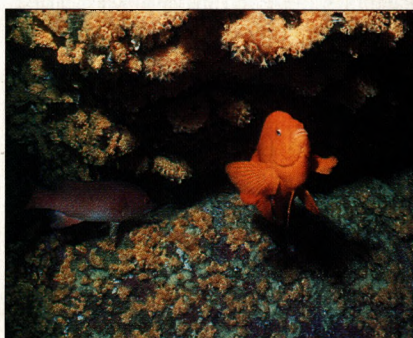
Catalina's Scuba Outpost

The Civilized Uncivilized Retreat

TEXT AND PHOTOGRAPHY BY BONNIE J. CARDONE



Above: Scuba Outpost dock and buildings. Below: Looking east from a hill above Doctor's Cove, Emerald Bay and Scuba Outpost. Below left: A Garibaldi, Sheep-head and yellow anemones at Ship Rock.



Although it's only about 20 miles from Los Angeles, Santa Catalina Island's Emerald Bay, home to Scuba Outpost, might as well be light years away. There are no freeways here, no condos, no hotels, no restaurants. The acres of grassy, cactus dotted hills, home to island fox, deer and wild boar (among others), do not sprout a forest of TV antennae.

As you approach Scuba Outpost from the sea aboard *Miss Christy*, all is serene. Trees, including enormous eucalyptus, shade the quiet camp; calm emerald waters lap its rocky shore. The large brown building unobtrusively nestled in the center is the dining hall, complete with fireplace. The small white cabins dotting the hillside will be your weekend home.

One does not come to Scuba Outpost for luxury (although there are surprises). This is a rustic retreat. Each unheated cabin contains eight single bunks. The thick mattresses are comfortable but you supply the bedding (sleeping bags are recommended). The showers and restrooms are steps away, in separate unheated buildings (bring your own towels).

One does come to Scuba Outpost for a serene, relaxing weekend that includes diving and hiking along, perhaps, with snorkeling and kayaking.

The weekend begins in Marina del Rey on Friday with an 8:00 am departure on the *Miss Christy*. Ninety minutes later you'll be at the Outpost dock. A Weekend Getaway includes unlimited beach diving and four boat dives. Friday is a free day; no boat dives are scheduled. This allows plenty of time to settle into your cabin, take a hike, get a good start on that novel you always meant to read and/or make a beach dive or two.

Although most people prefer to bring all of their own gear except tanks and weights, you can arrive on the island with no equipment at all and everything needed will be supplied. That all gear is

included is one of the surprises I mentioned earlier. Meals are another.

During summer weekdays, Scuba Outpost is a Boy Scout and Sea Scout camp. As you wander the grounds on Weekend Getaways, you can imagine what they must be like when occupied by 300 to 400 exuberant scouts. I don't know what meals the boys are served but I'm certain they're not what we enjoyed! Dinners may include herb seasoned roast leg of lamb and roast chicken or steak and shrimp, accompanied by bowtie pasta, new potatoes, salad and steamed vegetables, all perfectly cooked and served family style.

Lunches are pasta salads and make-your-own-sandwiches along with sliced melon, kiwi fruit and strawberries. Coffee and hot tea are always available on the dining hall porch, bottled water and soft drinks are available in a cooler at the dining hall (there's also a cooler in each cabin). Each cabin also has a bowl of apples, oranges, bananas and snack bars for energy between meals.

Breakfasts feature omelettes made to order (with a gourmet supply of ingredients) as well as hot cereal, fruit, hash browns, bagels and yogurt.

On Sunday, sandwiches and fruit are offered aboard the *Miss Christy* on the trip home.

Scuba Outpost is right on Emerald Bay, a calm, popular power and sailboat anchorage. I've made numerous dives at **Indian Rock**, in the center of the bay. It is best dived by boat since it is 400 yards from the Scuba Outpost beach, there is almost always boat traffic and there can be strong currents. Indian Rock, less than 30 feet deep, features a kelp forest that is home to Horn Sharks, Garibaldi and other typical California sealife.

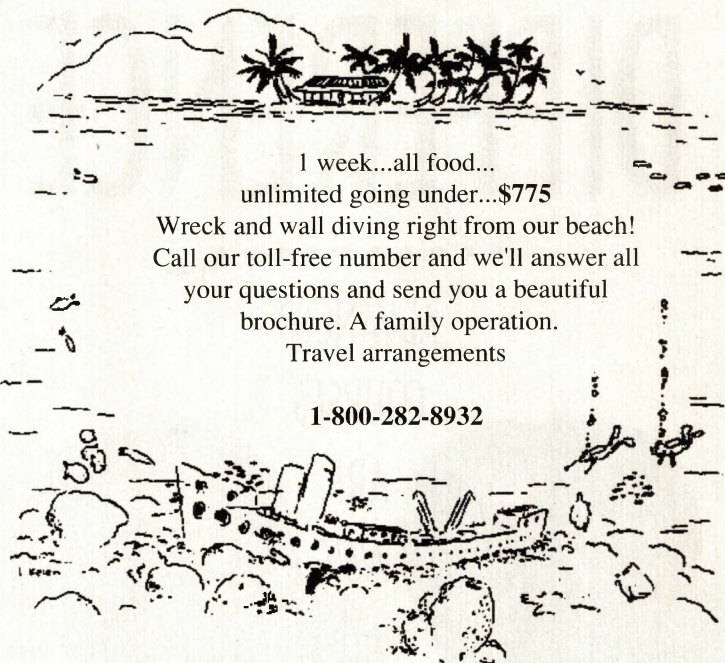
Scuba Outpost beach dives can be made in little **Doctor's Cove**. After an easy entry from a rocky beach, you can swim west to **Table Rock**. An easterly swim (often with the aid of a light current) will take you around a bend and onto the beach by the Scuba Outpost dock. Both dives feature kelp and a multitude of marine creatures. On our easterly swim, my buddy, Brian Downing, reported seeing numerous juvenile Horn Sharks. Leopard Sharks and Bat Rays have also been sighted here.

After your dive, leave your tanks and weightbelts on the beach (it is a luxury not to have to lug them!); the staff will take care of them. A freshwater rinse station has been set up outside the showers for the rest of your gear. There is room to hang wetsuits and BCs as well as spread mask, fins, etc., to dry. (It will dry quickly, Catalina is an arid island, receiving only about 14 inches of rain a year.)

There was no boat diving on the Saturday of our trip owing to high winds.

Our front yard is a wreck,

and a 110 foot wall, and a snorkel away from the bar



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SCUBA OUTPOST

This is an unusual occurrence at Emerald Bay, only a nor'wester can rile the waters of this protected cove. For me, however, the sites we dived on Sunday, among the best Catalina has to offer, made up for the lack of diving the day before.

On that Sunday, six of us boarded the 18 foot inflatable (the 47 foot *Miss Christy* is now being used for diving) and motored to the Isthmus to dive Ship Rock and Isthmus Reef.

Ship Rock is one of my favorite Catalina dives. The tall rock, covered with bird guano, resembles the sail of a ship when seen from afar, thus its name. Depths range from the surface down to 125 feet. Swept by currents, the water is almost always clear. On this day we only had about 30 feet of visibility but it often reaches 75 to 100 feet here. The dive is made close to the rock in a thick kelp forest. There is plentiful marine life and the remains of the *Diosa del Mar*, a wooden 1898 staysail schooner that ran aground in 1990. California Sealions play here; bright orange Garibaldi dart here and there among the kelp fronds. The rocky slopes and crevices are home to Horn and Swell Sharks as well as myriad smaller creatures, including nudibranchs and bright patches of encrusting yellow anemones.

Santa Catalina has a mild climate. In the winter, the air temperature can drop into the 50s (°F) at night; it rarely rises above 80 during summer days. Winter water temperatures can be in the low to middle 50s, in the late summer and fall they can be as warm as 72°F.

Scuba Outpost also offers two day getaways. Guests take a ferry (not included in the package) to Avalon or Two Harbors. (An Avalon arrival requires a 90 minute bus ride to Two Harbors.) Scuba Outpost picks up guests in Two Harbors (also known as the Isthmus) and transports them by truck or boat to the camp.

Scuba Getaways offer an opportunity to increase your scuba skills by taking a course for an additional fee. Open water certification is offered every weekend, as is advanced certification, fish ecology and a buoyancy clinic. Every other weekend, rescue and divemaster certifications are offered (the latter takes two weekends).

Once a month, open water scuba instructor, medic first aid, master scuba diver, enriched air instructor, oxygen instructor and tank inspector are offered.

The remote west end of Santa Catalina Island is a special, unspoiled place; Scuba Outpost offers a rare opportunity to experience it to the fullest. For more information and/or reservations, contact Scuba Outpost, 726 Washington

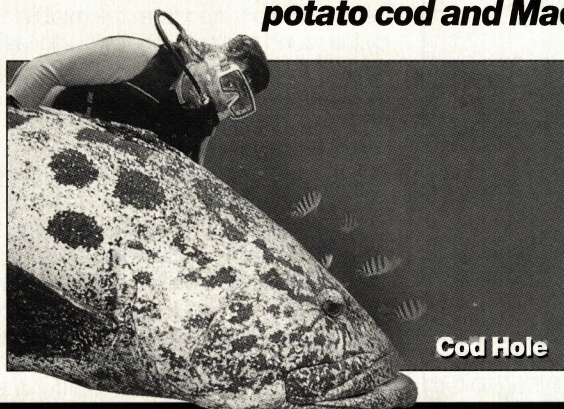
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Cod Hole — Huge Moray eels, giant potato cod and Maori Wrasse



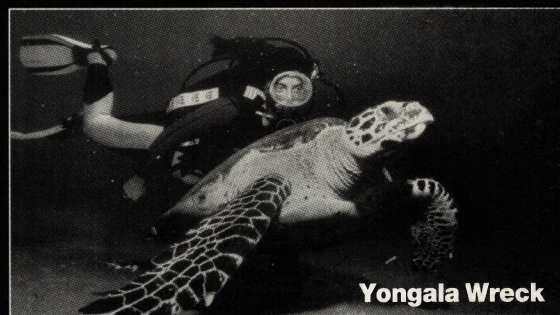
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


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DIVING MEDICINE

(Continued from Page 20)

specialist to determine the reason.

INNER EAR PROBLEMS

The inner ear consists of the hearing (auditory) and balance (vestibular) organs and their nerve connections to the brain. The inner ear is connected to the spinal fluid space and, when injured, can allow infection to spread into the brain. The inner ear is separated from the middle ear by the round and oval windows. Injuries to the middle ear include round window rupture, inner ear decompression sickness and vestibular decompression sickness.

ROUND WINDOW RUPTURE. A more serious barotrauma related to diving is rupture of the round window (RWR). You can cause RWR by forcefully trying to equalize during descent. By doing a Valsalva maneuver to equalize, you raise the pressure in the inner ear above ambient pressure. If the eustachian tube is blocked, the middle ear pressure will be below ambient and the large pressure difference can blow out the round window (see diagram). When the round window tears, fluid from the inner ear leaks into the middle ear. This fluid normally stabilizes both the hearing and the balance organs. When fluid is lost, hearing is lost; vertigo occurs and hissing or buzzing is heard constantly. The tear in the round window can heal itself but surgery is often needed to correct the problem. If repair is incomplete, permanent partial hearing loss is likely and diving is no longer recommended. This injury, like middle ear squeeze, is totally preventable.

INNER EAR DECOMPRESSION SICKNESS (DCS). Rarely, DCS can occur in the inner ear and cause permanent hearing loss or permanent abnormalities in balance. This injury is characterized by sudden total hearing loss in one ear following a dive. Inner ear DCS usually occurs in commercial divers after deep saturation diving. One case of suspected inner ear DCS was recounted in a sport diver but considering the larger number of sport divers and the questionable diagnosis, there should be no concern for inner ear DCS in sport diving. If other symptoms, such as hearing loss, vertigo, dizziness or loud roaring or ringing noises are present, you should promptly consult an ENT (ear, nose and throat) specialist.

PERFORATED EARDRUM. You should not

dive with a perforated eardrum. Sometimes cold water entering the middle ear through a perforated eardrum will upset the balance mechanism next to the middle ear and cause sudden vertigo, dizziness or even vomiting. None of these things are conducive to safe diving. As noted above, a hole in your eardrum will allow water to enter the middle ear and cause an infection. However, most eardrum perforations caused by diving are not permanent. If you rupture an eardrum, you should see a physician, get treatment to prevent ear infection and wait for healing to occur. You may be unable to dive for three to four weeks but with proper care, the drum will heal. After your doctor's approval, you should be able to dive again.

Chronic eardrum perforations usually occur when there is poor eustachian tube function. Unless the tube functions properly, the perforation will not heal. Frequently, poor eustachian tube function is related to allergy or chronic sinus infection. Individuals who have a permanent perforation should consult an ENT specialist. They should not dive until the causes of poor eustachian tube function have been adequately treated and the eardrum perforation has been repaired.

Divers need to be aware that most chronic middle ear disease results from poor eustachian tube function. Many nondivers have these problems. Anyone who has inadequate eustachian tube function will develop middle and, possibly, inner ear barotrauma when exposed to the ambient pressure changes encountered in diving.

PREVENTING EAR INJURY. The problem with equalizing originates from the inside of the ears and throat. You should learn the various ways to clear your ears. If you still have trouble after using the correct method of clearing, have an ear, nose and throat exam by a doctor who knows diving medicine. Before seeking more medical advice, try the following: descend in the water feet first; begin to clear your ears on the surface before you begin your descent; and clear continuously as you descend. Be careful not to bear down too hard or you will risk a round window rupture.

When diving, all the tissues of the body are subjected to the increased pressure of the surrounding water. The ears cannot be excluded from the ambient pressure of diving and, because their function is to detect the minuscule pressure changes caused by sound, they are the weakest link among the pressure sensitive organs. You are likely to experience ear problems sometime during your diving lifetime. Protection of your ears during diving requires careful attention to the health of your nose and throat and to your descent and ascent techniques. 🐟

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ADVANCED DIVING

(Continued from Page 25)

to the surface, how will you get it into the boat or up on the shore? Also, be certain the large item was not placed on the bottom on purpose. Divers have been known to recover things such as an engine block that was the anchor for a permanent mooring buoy.

WHAT MORE CAN YOU DO?

Personal commitment and peer group pressure are powerful tools in the war against underwater trash. Make it your personal policy that no trash is thrown overboard. Encourage docks or marinas to provide adequate recycling and trash bins. Local tackle shops may recycle monofilament line. Call (800) 237-5539, extension 320 to recycle fishing line through a Berkley center. Help organize and/or participate in an underwater cleanup program at your favorite beach and dive site.

If you see unlawful dumping, take photographs or videos of the dumping and the name of the vessel. International law and U.S. law prohibit the dumping of plastic trash in the oceans or navigable inland waterways and limit the overboard disposal of other garbage. The United States Coast Guard is charged with enforcement of the MARPOL Annex V laws.

If you spot potentially dangerous items such as 55 gallon drums or medical waste, notify local authorities. Which agency provides this service in a local area varies. Typically, the chain of communication is from the diver to the beach divemaster to the cleanup coordinator. This activity leader will then notify the local police, fire department or hazardous materials cleanup team as appropriate. When a governmental agency is aware of the hazard, it will have a prescribed communication and action plan.

SUMMARY

If you have ever seen a ghost net drifting and killing hapless creatures caught in its webbing or a sealion slowly dying from a plastic ring cutting into its flesh or a pelican with its head and wing tangled in fishing line, you understand the lethal nature of marine trash. A fun day of diving is an easy contribution to the health of the underwater environment that returns the pleasure to us manifold.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

For complete information on how to plan an underwater cleanup event, or how to participate in the September 21, 1996, International Coastal Cleanup, contact the Center for Marine Conservation, International Cleanup Coordinator,

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July 28-Aug. 3	Bahama Adventure
Aug. 4-Aug. 10	Cay Sal Bank
Aug. 11-Aug. 17	Cay Sal Bank
Aug. 18-Aug. 24	Cay Sal Bank
Aug. 25-Aug. 31	Bahama Adventure
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Sept. 8-Sept. 14	Bahama Adventure
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Two excellent booklets to request from the Center for Marine Conservation are *All About Beach Cleanups—A Helpful Planning Guide* and the *Pocket Guide to Marine Debris*.

For copies of the Underwater Cleanup and Conservation Monitoring Program brochure or the slide show on underwater cleanups, contact the Center for Marine Conservation—Gulf Coast Region, One Beach Drive, #304, St. Petersburg, FL 33701; (813) 895-2188. 🐟

WIN A BOAT— SINK A SHIP KEY LARGO RAFFLE

Key Largo, Florida has long been recognized as one of the world's premier destinations for both coral reef and shipwreck diving. While Mother Nature has graciously blessed the area with spectacular coral reefs, the wreck offerings have been augmented by intentionally sinking ships to serve as artificial reefs and dive attractions.

The local dive and business community had its first great success with this program in 1987 by raising the \$175,000 necessary to clean the 327 foot U.S. Coast Guard cutters *Bibb* and *Duane*, tow them from Boston and sink them one mile south of Molasses Reef. The decommissioned ships had been donated but it was up to the Key Largo dive community to raise the money to make the project a reality. Obviously they succeeded and the two ships are among the most popular wreck dives in the Western Hemisphere.

Now it is time to embrace another shipwreck project for Key Largo. The *Bibb* and *Duane* sit in 130 and 120 feet respectively, perfect for experienced divers but beyond the comfort level of beginners. Plus, the *Duane* is so popular dive boats may have to wait in line for one of the mooring buoys. As a result, Key Largo dive operators have targeted a new artificial reef site in only 100 feet of water. They propose to sink a giant 510 foot ship there during the summer of 1996. The *Spiegel Grove* project will add another much needed ship to the Key Largo dive portfolio. Because of the shallower depth, greater profile of the ship and a location protected from the more extreme Gulf Stream currents, this new shipwreck promises to be even more accessible and popular than the *Duane*.

The *Spiegel Grove* was launched in 1955 as a transport for amphibious



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boats. There is a cavernous stern compartment that will be home to schools of grunts and snappers shortly after she settles into her new home just north of the *Benwood* and south of **The Elbow**. Her massive wheelhouse and deck structure will also provide spectacular habitat for tropical marine life.

Sinking this ship still requires a major fundraising effort by Key Largo dive operators. At least \$200,000 has to be raised to clean the *Spiegel Grove* of potential contaminants and tow her to her designated artificial reef site. To assist in the funding of this project, the Key Largo Chamber of Commerce is sponsoring a raffle to win a 21 foot Wahoo openfisherman with a 200 horsepower Mercury outboard.

This fabulous boat and motor will go to the lucky winner who buys a \$100 raffle ticket. There is a guarantee that no more than 2,000 tickets will be sold, creating a very good chance of success. But the real advantage is that the proceeds go directly toward the sinking of the *Spiegel Grove*.

This project is nearing its final stages but there is still time to buy a raffle ticket. Call the Key Largo Chamber of Commerce at (800) 822-1088 to buy a ticket today! They will happily accept credit cards and send your raffle ticket to you in time for the big drawing.

For corporate sponsors who would like to be involved with the *Spiegel Grove* Project, a tax exempt fund has been established to facilitate contributions. For further information, contact Stephen Frink at (305) 451-3737.

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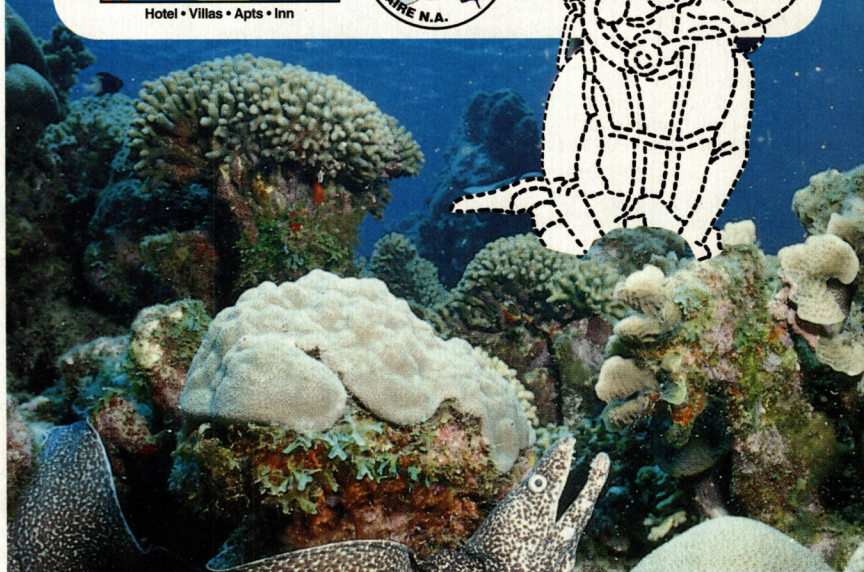


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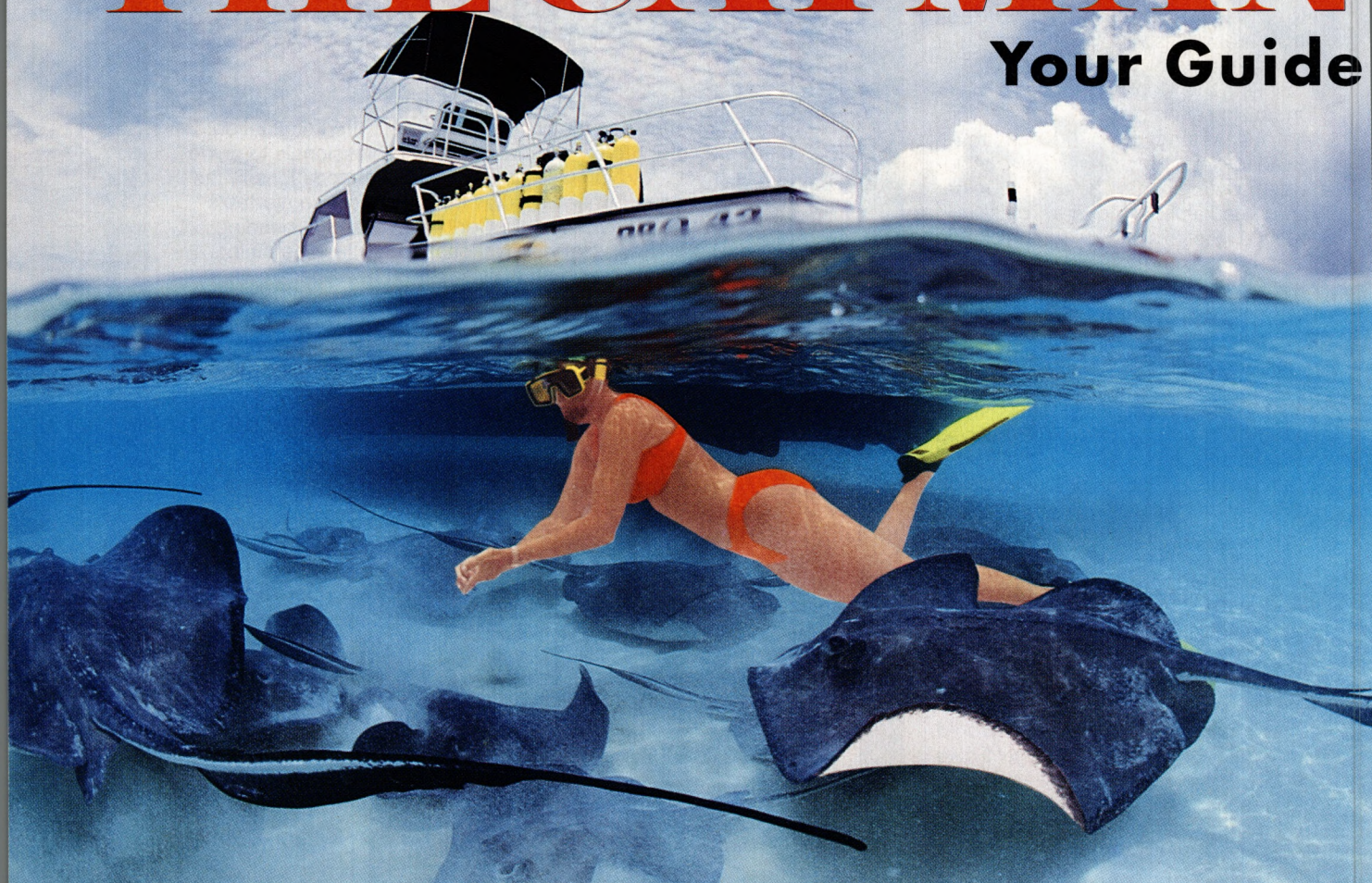
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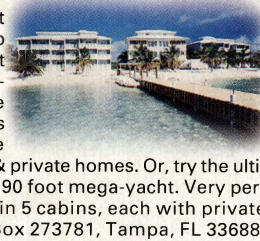
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THE CAYMAN ISLANDS

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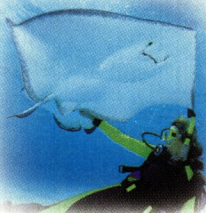
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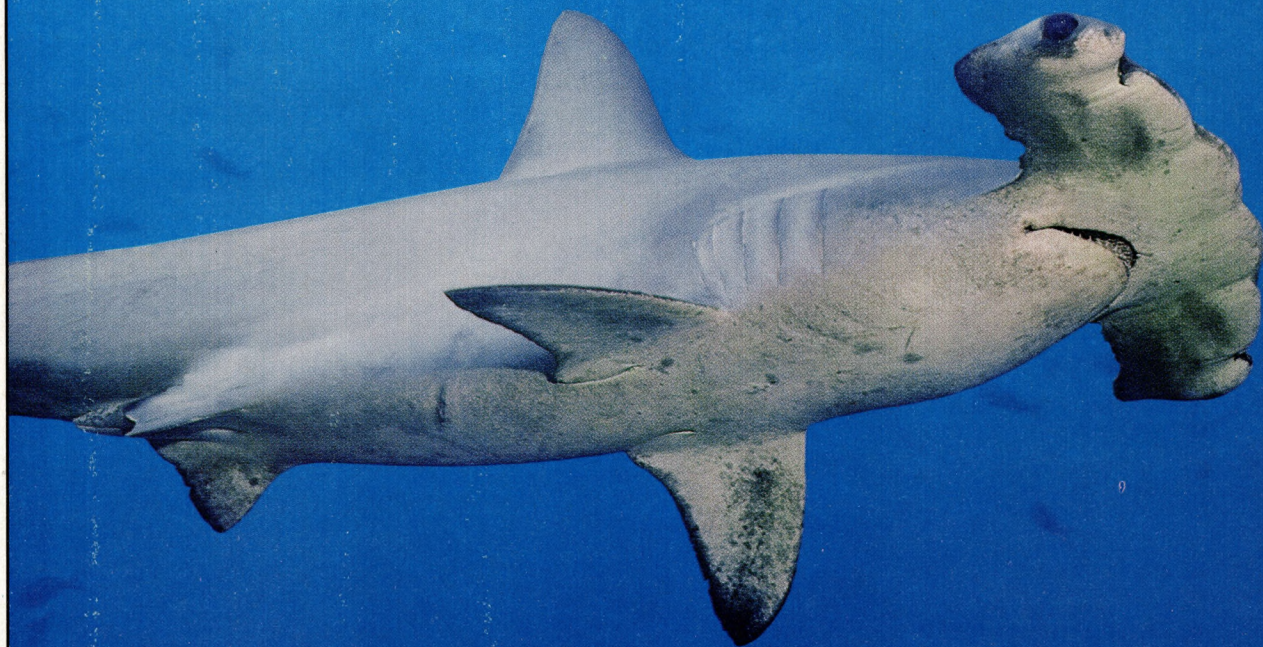
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The Lammer Law



Adventure Diving The Unforgettable Galapagos



Top: Scalloped Hammerhead, Roca Redonda. Above: A marine iguana's regal pose on Santiago Island. Below: Galapagos Tortoise, Darwin Station, Santa Cruz.



TEXT AND PHOTOGRAPHY BY BILL HARRIGAN

There is no other place on earth like the Galapagos Islands. Four major ocean currents intersect there, over a thin spot in the earth's crust that still spouts hot lava. Much of the coastal terrain appears desolate and prehistoric. Marine iguanas sun themselves on the volcanic rock next to penguins and sealions. Hammerhead Sharks patrol below, their bizarre profiles shaped by 300 million years of evolution. Red-lipped Batfish, apparently constructed from the cosmic spare parts bin, sit serenely on the bottom, fishing for their prey. Magnificent Manta Rays fly past underwater, scooping up bucketfuls of plankton. Diving the Galapagos is like a trip to another time.

Lammer Law was our time machine, a vessel far more luxurious than any science fiction writer has dreamed. With a length of 93 feet and a beam of 42, *Lammer Law* has exceptional stability and interior space. The huge salon, with wall to wall carpeting, section-

al couches and coffee tables, is more like an estate living room than a compartment on a boat. The excess size carries over into the nine bedrooms, each with a private bath, fine furniture and individually controlled air-conditioning. Large overhead hatches and windows in each room make the ambiance light and airy. Forget about cramped bunk beds—*Lammer Law* is equipped with queen sized beds that convert to twins in all cabins. Meals are served on the teak aft deck, with immaculate linens and sparkling flatware. We ate like royalty!

SUNDAY

Mathias Espinosa, a Galapagos Park Naturalist and our divemaster, showed us around *Lammer Law*'s spacious dive deck, where individual storage bins and aluminum 80s were provided for each of us. We set up our BCs and regulators once, then the crew took care of everything. The tanks were quickly filled after each dive.



Left: The bizarre Red-lipped Batfish (*Ogcocephalus darwini*) at Tagus Cove. Below: Galapagos Sealions frolic in the channel between North and South Plaza Island, off Santa Cruz.



Galapagos diving is done from dinghies because it is not possible to anchor directly over the dive sites. *Lammer Law*'s trimaran design makes boarding the dinghies a snap. Two sets of wide steps lead down to the dinghies, which rest securely on either side of the main hull. The dinghies are roomy, stable Carib 20 foot rigid hull inflatables.

The first dive was a warm-up in shallow water and extra weights were brought out so we could make adjustments to our belts. The action underwater started right away, with a school of Golden Cowrays passing overhead. We also saw a preview of the colorful fish to come during the week.

MONDAY

Scalloped Hammerheads visited us for the first time this morning at **North Seymour**. Impressive would be an understatement! We also got a taste of the currents and thermoclines that make the Galapagos a destination for experienced divers. We found Mat was right when he told us the visibility changes from day to day and site to site. The visibility actually changed during the course of a dive. Most of the time we had 60 to 80 feet but we also had a number of spectacular dives with visibility of more than 100 feet.

About halfway through the dive my partner and I came across an incredibly thick aggregation of Yellowtail Grunts. We were able to hover right in their midst. Just as we left the grunts, blue footed boobies began diving from far above us. They hit the water like arrows, leaving a U-shaped trail of bubbles as they penetrated as deep as 20 feet to snare a fish.

TUESDAY

At dawn we were anchored near **Roca Redonda**, a monolith thrust from the water well away from the other islands. Shearwaters and petrels skimmed the water all around us.

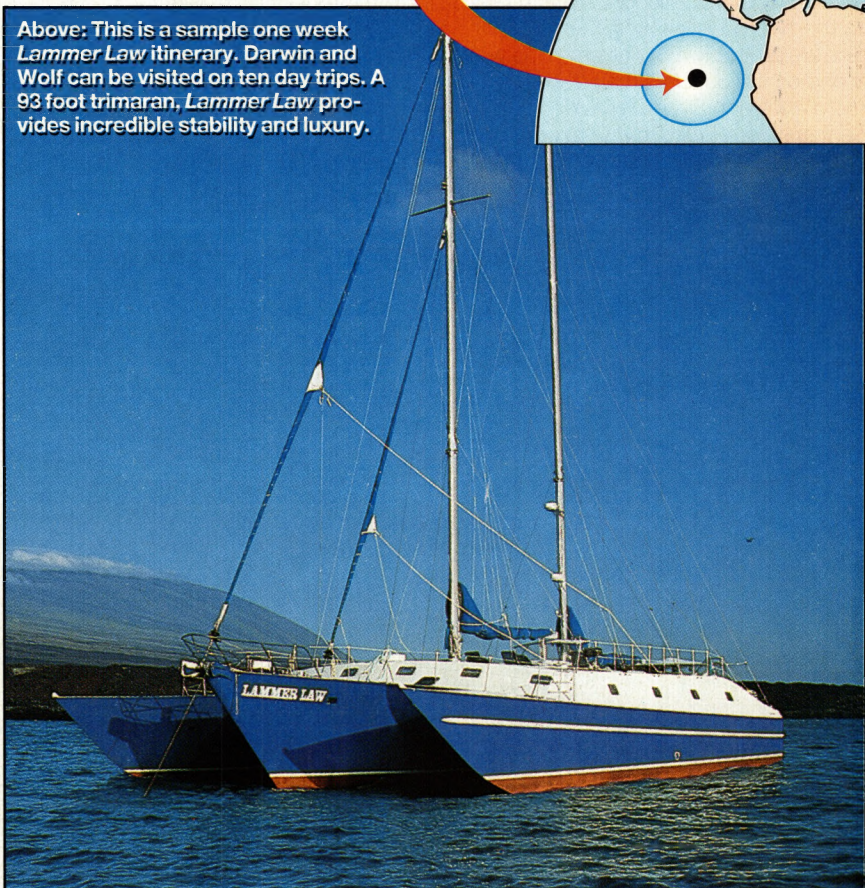
Before breakfast we dropped out of the dinghy next to a school of hundreds

(Continued on Page 66)



The crew, from left to right: Johnny Fuloaga, Captain Rolando Garcia, Nelson Zambrano, Llobany Briones, Mathia Espinosa, Nicolas Sancan, Tony Cedenno and John Fitzgerald.

Above: This is a sample one week *Lammer Law* itinerary. Darwin and Wolf can be visited on ten day trips. A 93 foot trimaran, *Lammer Law* provides incredible stability and luxury.



Dixie Divers Lobstermania

**July 24 to 25 Mini Season
Opening is Also a Reef and
Beach Cleanup**

TEXT AND PHOTOGRAPHY BY SHIRLEY VANDERBILT

It's a tailgate party! Lobster tail, that is. And it's one of the biggest social events of the year in sunny south Florida. Lobstermania, now considered as much a sociological phenomenon as a planned event, began when Dixie Divers sponsored a small competition for the largest lobster caught during the July mini season. That was back in 1979 and the prize was \$100. This year, with thousands of entrants expected, there will be more than \$35,000 worth of prizes awarded throughout Dixie Divers' dozen retail stores.

But, Lobstermania isn't just about catching lobsters. Recognizing that during the two day opening mini season there are probably more divers in the water and on the beaches than at any other time of the year, Dixie Divers decided to use this unique opportunity to combine lobster lust with community participation in preserving the environment. As part of the reef and beach cleanup competition,

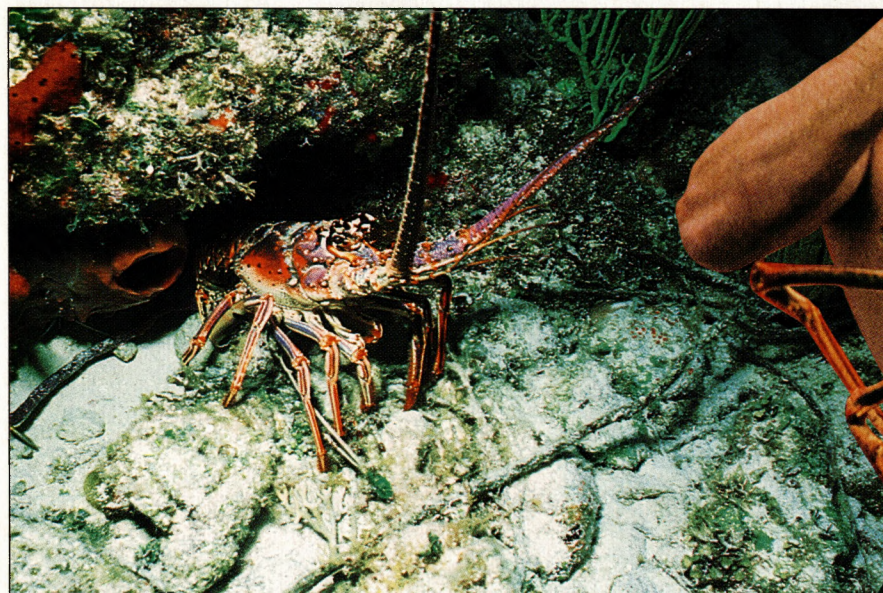
many divers are emerging with things other than lobsters in their catch bags. Categories for prizes include the most unique and most humorous trash finds, as well as a prize for the largest total amount collected. The bad news for competitors and good news for the status of our reefs, is that trash is getting harder to come by. What better indication could there be that our efforts to save the environment are working?

If you're having a hard time finding trash, you just might want to go for the lobsters. But, before you do, you'll need to be well prepared, not only with equipment but also information. The lobsters may be easy to find but catching them requires skill, knowledge and patience.

The Florida Spiny Lobster, much different from its northeastern relative, has no claws with which to defend itself. But



Above: Bruce Paul proudly displays his catch. Below: Divers are required to carry a gauge and measure lobsters U/W; the carapace must be more than three inches.



Above: A Florida Spiny Lobster (*Panulirus argus*) on the lookout for Lobstermania participants. Right: Steve Metz bagged this 11 pound lobster and the grand prize in 1995.



don't let that fool you. The sharp spines, placed in strategic positions all along the animal's head, or carapace, are what give it its name and a reputation as a formidable prey. Scientists know this crustacean as *Panulirus argus*. Florida locals have more endearingly bestowed it with the title of "bug," perhaps in response to its prehistoric, bug-like appearance.

To catch lobsters you need to know a little about their behavior as well as their physique. Protruding from the spiny head are two equally spiny antennae, usually the first thing you'll see alerting you to the lobster's presence under the ledge. Many novice hunters have mistakenly grabbed this end of the lobster, expecting the bug to follow, but found themselves holding only the broken remains of the antennae—a bad move for both lobster and hunter. Biologists have indicated that whenever a lobster loses its antennae or legs energy that would have been directed toward the growth of its meaty tail is then diverted to regenerate the lost appendage. This not only results in smaller lobsters but also a corresponding reduction in egg production in females. So remember, a rear attack is always best, whether you tickle them out into a net or use a snare.

Back in the old days, we used to catch lobsters by hand. But more sophisticated tools now save us from being painfully impaled by the sharp spines. These new tools have also enabled us to more safely return those lobsters considered illegal. Florida's saltwater fishing laws prohibit the taking of any female Spiny Lobster bearing eggs, the bright orange clusters ("berries") tucked beneath the tail. You'll find egg bearers at both the beginning and the end of the season so look carefully before attempting your catch. Lobsters must have a carapace of more than three inches and this measurement must be obtained underwater, prior to bringing the animal to the surface. The measurement is made by hooking one side of the gauge at the notch between the horns and measuring to the other end of the carapace. In addition to being illegal, tossing "shorts" back in after they've made the trip to the boat further stresses the bug and decreases its chances of reaching legal length.

These are just a few of the ins and outs of lobster hunting; for more detailed information you might want to take advantage of Dixie Divers' free seminars throughout the week leading up to Lobstermania. The informal lectures cover guidelines for hunting, state regulations on size and limits, a review of legal hunting methods and equipment, as well as safety precautions and conservation tips for protecting the reef and other marine life.

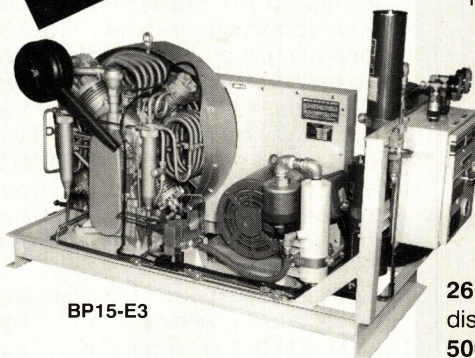
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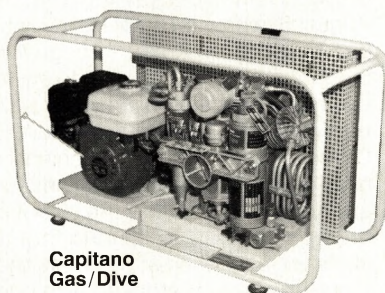
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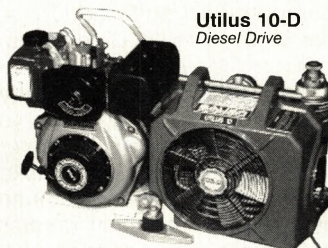


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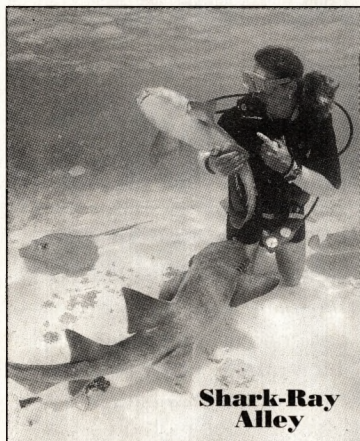
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DIXIE DIVERS LOBSTERMANIA

the dive industry, began in the late '70s as a small dive shop in Ft. Pierce, established to meet the needs of local divers. Growing by leaps and bounds, the company now includes a world renowned training institute, dive travel services, franchise opportunities and a chain of quality PADI Five Star facilities throughout southern and central Florida. With all this expansion, Dixie Divers has never lost that downhome, family atmosphere that first attracted local divers. Events such as Lobstermania give divers a chance to socialize and share in wholesome fun, with activities that eclipse generation gaps to include the young and the old. In more recent years, local radio stations have joined in the fun, generating impromptu parties at their live broadcasts from the Dixie Divers parking lot. As the end of the competition draws near, the parking lot swells with anxious entrants awaiting final tallies. By the time the winners are announced, a huge tailgate picnic is well underway, with the usual swapping of tall lobster tales.

Lobstermania takes place this year on July 24 and 25, with many avid hunters jumping in the water right at midnight. Florida's two day mini season was established to provide recreational divers a chance at the bugs before the opening of the commercial fishing season on August 6, when traps are legally set. The season is closed April 1 through August 5, when lobsters are most likely to reproduce. For the convenience of those participating in the mini season, Dixie Divers' stores will remain open until midnight July 23, reopen at 7:00 am July 24 and remain open until the deadline at 6:00 pm on July 25. During that time, airfills will be offered at \$1 per fill and the stores will be well stocked with hunting supplies such as nets, gloves, snares and tickle sticks.

To participate in the Lobstermania competition, you'll need to register in person at your local Dixie Divers store by 7:00 pm the evening prior to the competition. Registration is free but you may enter at only one location and your entry must be weighed and measured at that same location. What does it take to win? Well, some of the past winners of the granddaddy prize (the overall grand prize) have weighed in excess of 12 to 14 pounds; last year's winner tilted the scales at a "mere" 11 pounds! Lobsters are awarded prizes based on cumulative points, which includes weight, girth and length. They must be freshly caught in Florida waters and are permanently marked at their check-in.

Each store awards a first, second and third prize, then cumulative points of all first prize winners are compared to determine the winner of the granddaddy prize. Grand prize winners in the past have walked away with such treasures as a Chronosport dive watch, custom fit wetsuit and a complete set of U.S. Divers gear. Each store has 40 additional prizes, ranging from dive equipment and accessories to free charter trips or weekend getaways. Whether you bring in lobster or trash, it's all great fun and just by participating you'll be entered in a prize drawing. If you were successful on your hunt, then the best prize of all awaits you when you dig into that succulent, white lobster meat hot off the grill or out of the oven.

It's no coincidence there are Dixie Divers stores near all the great lobster spots, from the Florida Keys to Vero Beach. With a diversity of settings, Florida offers an abundance of marine life, including a healthy population of lobsters. Lobsters are night hunters, leaving their ledges after dark to roam for food. But most are caught during the day, while still hiding within the reef, sometimes sharing their space with a Green Moray Eel or a sleeping Nurse Shark. Our Lobstermania photo shoot provided us with not only an exciting lobster hunt but also sightings of huge Loggerhead Turtles, an octopus and schools of huge Barracuda. It's said the largest bugs are to be found off Ft. Pierce and Vero Beach but I've heard stories of impressive captures off Ft. Lauderdale and Key Largo. And, like the 1994 Lobstermania winner, you might even catch your prize on a beach dive. If you do prefer a boat dive, there are charter operations all along the southern Florida coast participating in the mini season.

To turn your next dive vacation into an exciting Lobstermania event just call Dixie Divers at (800) FLA-DIVE; fax (407) 466-3444. Its extensive travel service will be invaluable in putting together your travel plans. You may arrange hotel and motel packages, book your boat trips and sign up for specialty certifications, all with one phone call. They'll also send you a registration packet for the competition but remember to bring it in person to the shop before the deadline. The Lobstermania event is a great outing for the entire family, with plenty of excitement for nondivers as well. And, Florida's offerings are so diverse you can format your vacation to match your diving skills as well as leisure time activities. So, come on down and join us in sunny, south Florida—pick a little trash, tickle a little lobster and go for the prize! And now, I believe my lobster tale is done and it's time to eat! 🦞

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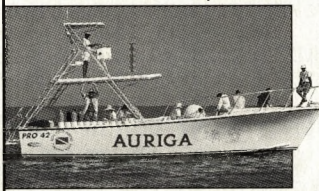
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LAMMER LAW

(Continued from Page 61)

of closely packed Barracuda that scarcely reacted to our intrusion. First, we stopped to see the geysers bubbling through the bottom in about 30 feet of water. From there, stacks of boulders covered with barnacles and orange sponges form a slope down to about 50 feet, where the bottom levels out in volcanic rubble. We drifted down through schools of Yellowtailed Surgeonfish, Galapagos Grunts and King Angelfish.

At first we saw only one or two Scaloped Hammerheads, then small groups of three and four. Finally, the main pack slid into view from the blue haze, 70 or more magnificent animals, each eight to ten feet long. Before we surfaced the whole pack wheeled past us three more times. Those strangely flattened heads are so extraordinary! They are unforgettable, especially at close quarters.

On the way back to *Lammer Law*, we approached a group of Galapagos Sea lions resting at the surface. Some of us slipped into the water and eased over to the group. Several sealions checked us

out but then we were admitted to the fold and snorkeled for a while in their midst.

Roca Redonda was as far north as we traveled during our week, however, there are 10 day trips on *Lammer Law* available that include Wolf and Darwin Islands. Conditions are variable from trip to trip in the Galapagos but if you have the time available, these islands have a reputation for big animal encounters.

WEDNESDAY

Overnight, Rolando had moved *Lammer Law* to **Cabo Marshall** on the eastern side of Isabela, crossing to the south side of the equator once again. We were eager to dive here because it is known to be frequented by Manta Rays. We weren't disappointed. Two large mantas came by at the beginning of the dive and a third visited with us briefly at the end. In between we saw a dozen or so White-tipped Reef Sharks, including four that were resting in a shallow cave. We found a large school of the endemic Black Striped Salema.

In the afternoon we went ashore at Puerto Egos, the site of an old salt farm. The trail took us along the beach for about 30 minutes and the wildlife was incredible. From birds such as the red-beaked oyster catcher and cactus finch to playful Fur Sealions and basking marine iguanas, we went from one up-close encounter to another.

To round out the day we made a night dive at **Rabida Island**. It was an easy 10 to 20 foot dive. The ledges were packed with sea turtles, eels, sleeping Creolefish, Spiny Lobster, octopus, Leopard Flounders and blennies. The best part, though, was the incredible phosphorescence. Even those who stayed aboard *Lammer Law* enjoyed the light show put on by the sealions as they streaked through the water leaving a glowing trail behind.

THURSDAY

Before our early morning dive at **Cousins Rock**, Mat said his toe was tingling—supposedly a sure sign of an impending world-class dive. He should take good care of that toe because his prediction was right on. We dropped into crystal conditions, with Cousins' characteristic ledges visible like giant steps on a monument. Starfish littered the sand about 150 feet below us and puffs of green coral sprouted in the fold of each ledge. A 12 foot Manta Ray hovered for a moment, shivered briefly, then accelerated quickly away through a cloud of Creolefish and Barracuda. We swam along the ledges, watching all three species of Galapagos Hawkfish—Coral, Longnosed and Hieroglyphic—dart among the corals and rocks. Eventually we stopped at the end of the point, in about 45 feet, and that's where

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Photo by: Mike Massey, DIT

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LAMMER LAW

the show really started. First a trio of Hammerheads cruised by, then a pair of sealions. From the opposite direction, a lone Spotted Eagle Ray flapped gently through our ranks. This one was followed by eight more and then all nine wheeled around and glided slowly over, silhouetted against the brilliant sun only a few feet away. When they finally departed, a pair of Green Sea Turtles came by to inspect us. Then the

sealions came back, this time with some of their compadres in a playful mood. What a dive!

We made two more dives during the day at Cousins Rock, each time encountering sealions, turtles, Hammerheads and a multitude of reef fish. The conditions were so good we were also able to make a rare night dive here. Each crevice was packed with fish and invertebrates.

FRIDAY

This was our day to see Santa Cruz, starting with a tour of the highlands.

SATURDAY

With our residual nitrogen levels reset, we were back in the water early, this time at **Gordon Rocks** on the northeast side of Santa Cruz. Between the two rocks that break the surface, there are three vertical ridges that come to within 30 or 40 feet of the surface. The ridges attract everything from tiny blennies to big Hammerheads.

One of our most dynamic dives was at **North Plaza Island**. With a pure sand bottom about 20 feet down and a steep, rocky shoreline, it was like swimming in a pool with playful sealions. For more than an hour we stood on our heads, zig-zagged back and forth and generally behaved like kids on a playground.

SUNDAY

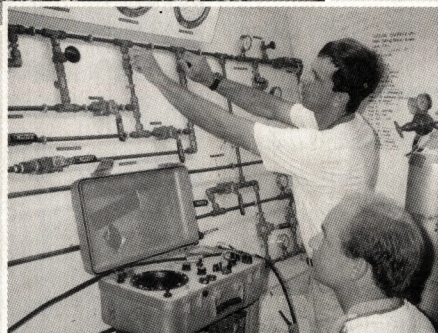
Although Sunday is primarily a travel day, we started off with an excursion ashore and a delightful encounter with a large group of one and two year old sealions. Their unbridled curiosity led them right up to our feet. It was a great way to leave these amazing islands.

SUPER CREW

Lammer Law's crew made our Galapagos trip great. Mat Espinosa, the naturalist and divemaster who was mentioned earlier, guided us safely from one fascinating discovery to another, with a flair that made it all fun. Captain Rolando Garcia ran *Lammer Law* with an assured competence and an engaging smile. Nelson Zambrano has been the boat's engineer for eight years and his skill is reflected in the smoothness with which everything works. Johnny Fuloaga and Tony Cedeno drove the dinghies and operated the deck equipment. Johnny and Tony were always in the right place at the right time, making our diving as easy as possible. Llobasny Briones and Nicolas Sančan, *Lammer Law's* chef and assistant chef, plied us with delicious meals from morning to night, with outstanding service provided by John Fitzgerald. One of the reasons the service aboard *Lammer Law* is so good is the company has an excellent on-site manager, Felipe de la Torre. Stationed in the Galapagos, Felipe ensures the freshest produce is delivered, needed spares are available and any



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TRAVEL INFORMATION

The Galapagos sit astride a complex set of ocean currents and trade winds generated from both sides of the equator. As a result the climate is very mild year-round, with two seasons. During the hot season from January to May, the southeast trade winds diminish and slightly warmer water moves in from the north. The *garua* or misty season, from June to December, is characterized by generally increased trade winds and the influx of slightly cooler water from the south. The water temperature is generally between 65 and 75°F but can sometimes be warmer or cooler. Layering is a good way to go, starting with a wetsuit in the 5 to 7mm range. For those cooler dives you can add a vest, hood and gloves for increased warmth.

Above water, T-shirts and shorts are comfortable nearly all the time. One pair of long pants and a light jacket can be useful in the evenings and in Quito, where the altitude keeps the air cool. Ecuador is called *Pais del Sol* or "Land of the Sun" because it is on the equator, so sunscreen is essential even though the climate is mild. Likewise a hat that shades your neck and face is a good idea for the shore excursions. Insect repellent can be useful on those nights when the wind dies.

A pair of sneakers or walking shoes are needed for shore excursions. For wet landings you carry your shoes and go ashore through ankle deep water on a sandy beach.

Sucres are the official currency of Ecuador, trading at just under 3,000 per dollar at this writing. Dollars and credit cards are also accepted in many places. One dollar bills come in handy for tips, taxi rides and other small expenses. Be prepared with cash, either dollars or sucres, for the \$80 Galapagos Park fee, the \$11 municipal tax on Baltra and the \$25 departure tax from Ecuador.

A passport is required for entry into Ecuador. American Airlines provides nonstop service from Miami to Quito, where an overnight stay is necessary before continuing on via the Ecuadorian airline TAME to the Galapagos. There are several excellent, reasonably priced hotels, such as the Akros or Alameda, within ten minutes of the Quito airport.

For more information or to make reservations for a *Lammer Law* trip, call (800) 648-3393 or write to Trimarine, P.O. Box 4065, St. Thomas, USVI 00803. Information can also be obtained by fax at (809) 494-5774. 🐟

Anthony's Key Resort

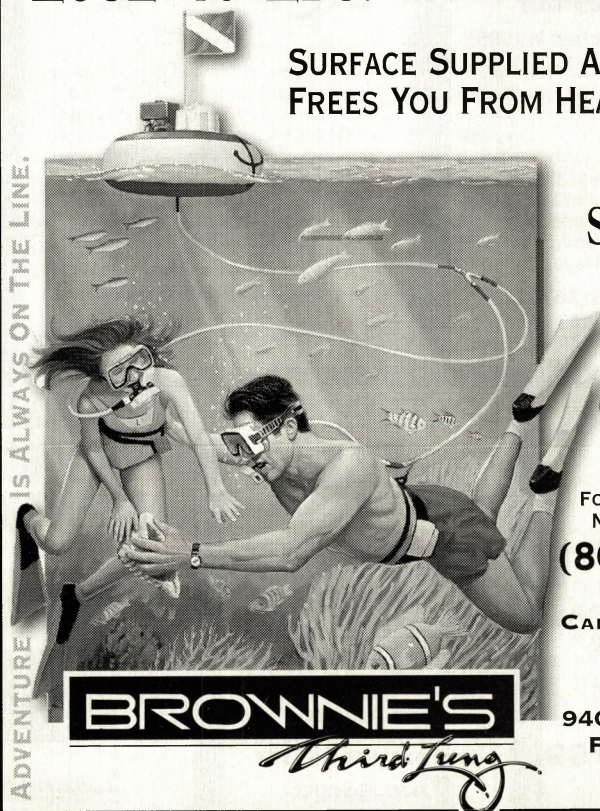
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The Florida Keys

The Islands You Can Drive To!

TEXT AND PHOTOGRAPHY BY STEPHEN FRINK



To drive the length of the Florida Keys today is a wondrous journey down a modern highway, unlike any other on earth. For the southbound tourist, a view to the left presents stunning vistas of a tropical, blue Atlantic Ocean, while to the right stretches the aquamarine wilderness known as Florida Bay and the Gulf of Mexico. For 106 miles, from Key Largo in the north to Key West at the southern tip of the Keys archipelago, the Overseas Highway transports motorists along a tropical paradise, rich with local color. Here, red and white dive flags dot the skyline, giving credence to the position of the Florida Keys as the Dive Capital of the World. The green of the unspoiled hardwood hummocks, the white of the snowy egret hiding amid the mangrove branches, the tawny brown of the shy Key deer and the vibrant golden hues of some of the best sunsets on the planet all contribute to a Keys' kaleidoscope, easily viewed through a windshield. These are The Islands You Can Drive To, a thoroughly unique experience. Yet, except for an accident of history, the 30 islands now linked by the bridges and roadways of U.S. Highway 1 might still be separate and distinct; the evolution of these islands quite different. The one event that most changed the face of the Florida Keys began in 1905 and was instigated by a man named Henry Flagler.

Henry Flagler was a former partner of John D. Rockefeller in Standard Oil, but the enterprise for which he is best remembered is his Florida East Coast Railroad. He was driven to continually push the track of his railroad farther south. Some say this is because his wives wanted to be warmer but more likely it was because, in a time of cargo transport by schooner and steamship, Key West offered a superb deep water port. Shipping out of Miami was limited by the 12 foot depth of Biscayne Bay but Key West could accommodate larger ships of deeper draft.



Above: An aerial view of Marathon Key. Left: Port-holes on the Duane, Key Largo. Below left: Lobster, Looe Key. Below: Great Blue Heron.



Key Largo



The Overseas Railroad, also ignominiously known as "Flagler's Folly," inched ever southward for seven years. The endeavor was hindered by voracious mosquitoes, unrelenting tropical heat and geography that required expensive bridges and embankments be built to raise the rails above the ever present sea. For a while, this monument of engineering prevailed over the implacable forces of nature. For 23 years the "Railroad that Went to Sea" operated, although never at a profit considering the \$27 million pre-depression dollars it took to build the line. Then, a hurricane of unimaginable magnitude swept it away. On September 2, 1935, an 18 foot tidal wave, borne of 200 mile an hour winds, dramatically invalidated the need for these bridges and track bed for the railroad. Flagler was dead by now and the railroad was in receivership. All the government had to do was buy the right of way and still standing bridges for just \$640,000 and superimpose a highway on its path. By 1938, the highway was complete and President Franklin D. Roosevelt became one of the first tourists to travel from Miami to Key West along its path.

Substantial improvements have been brought to the Overseas Highway since then, including widening it to four lanes in some places and creating bridges that are true engineering marvels. The Seven Mile Bridge, connecting Marathon to the Lower Keys, is one such example. Having withstood the 1935 hurricane, it was converted from a 14 foot wide railroad bridge to the 22 feet necessary for the automobiles of the time. For more than 40 years, this narrow bridge connected the Keys. Then, in 1982, a new and much improved Seven Mile Bridge was completed. With a 65 foot height clearance over Moser Channel, the new bridge no longer requires a swingspan to open when large boats pass, thereby allowing traffic to flow unimpeded.

Still, the basic purpose of the highway today is not so much different than it was in 1938, for it creates the world's most accessible tropical vacation paradise. Whether that access derives from driving to the Keys directly from wherever home

Islamorada

might be, flying to Miami and renting a car for the 50 mile jaunt to the northern Keys or even flying into the airports in Marathon or Key West, the Florida Keys are easy to get to. There are no passports required, no foreign borders to cross and no departure taxes to pay. Even though this is the Conch Republic in spirit, in reality it is still the U.S.

Even though it is easy to drive through the Keys, we who live here hope you'll pause to savor the individual flavor of these communities, both topside and underwater. In Key Largo, the sport of scuba diving rules. This is the home of **John Pennekamp Coral Reef State Park** and the **Key Largo National Marine Sanctuary**, places where a tradition of marine conservation has carried on for 36 years. Here historical shipwrecks such as



the **Benwood** and the **City of Washington** and modern wrecks intentionally sunk as dive attractions such as the Coast Guard cutters **Duane** and **Bibb** (as well as the newest shipwreck project, the **Spiegel Grove**) draw wreck dive enthusiasts from all over the world. And, those who love a natural coral reef rich with marine life will not be disappointed either, for popular dive sites such as **Molasses Reef** and **The Elbow** are among the most prolific in the Caribbean.

Islamorada is revered as the Sport Fishing Capital of the World, with backcountry anglers pursuing Tarpon and the gray ghost of the flats, the Bonefish, while offshore enthusiasts go for billfish, Dolphin and Wahoo. Divers likewise enjoy the profusion of fish here, including the clouds of grunts and Schoolmasters that shroud **Davis Reef**, the parade of pelagic critters that passes along the

Marathon

Conch Wall and the incredible mass of Tomate Grunts that fills the holds of the 287 foot shipwreck known as the **Eagle**.

The Middle Keys are between the Long Key Bridge to the north and the Seven Mile Bridge to the south, including the Keys' second largest center of population, Marathon. At first glance, the motorist passing through Marathon will discern a modern center of urban develop-

Don't catch more fish
than you can eat.
(Better yet, let them go.
Some of them support schools.)

ment, with shopping centers, car lots, grocery stores and even an airstrip dominating the view. But, those who pause to explore beyond U.S. 1 will discover quiet residential streets, secluded beaches, an excellent golf course and, of course, marinas, the gateways to an extensive system of fringing reefs and shipwrecks just five miles offshore. **Sombrero Reef** is marked by a large lighted tower and protected from unwitting anchor damage by dozens of mooring buoys strategically placed along the best sites. At **Coffin's Patch** a collection of six diverse reef areas attracts both divers and snorkelers to a rich coral community that includes Elkhorn, Staghorn, Star and an intact forest of rare Pillar Corals. The local dive community here worked long and hard to raise the funds to acquire and sink the **Thunderbolt**, a 188 foot former cable-layer that now rests upright in 115 feet of water. In the decade this ship has been on the bottom, schools of Amberjacks and huge angelfish have assumed residence, along with Barracuda, who reluctantly abandon the comfortable protection of the wheelhouse as divers intrude.

The Lower Keys are the most unspoiled of the Florida Keys, with vast stands of mangroves lining pristine waterways and massive hardwood hummocks that are essentially unchanged since 1874, when the government first surveyed the islands



Lower Keys

and plotted the land for homesteading. This is the home of a herd of the diminutive and endangered Key deer, a subspecies of the white-tailed deer. Standing only two and a half feet tall and weighing less than 75 pounds, these delicate creatures are found nowhere else but Big Pine Key. One of the best campgrounds in the Florida Keys is found at Bahia Honda State Park, as well as a beach that Conde Nast Traveler once rated as among the ten best in the world. Bahia Honda is Spanish for "Deep Bay," an appellation that must have had special significance for Flagler's engineers as they were forced to construct a bridge far more challenging than the Seven Mile Bridge because of the depths and tidal surges. The sight of the sun setting through the girders of the abandoned Bahia Honda Bridge is a glorious icon of Florida Keys scenery.

Yet as fascinating as the terrestrial delights of the Lower Keys might be, for divers the **Looe Key National Marine**



Sanctuary is Mecca. Here, amid a coral reef complex of only 5.3 square nautical miles, is a preserve that has been in place since 1981. Moorings prevent boaters from dropping anchors onto the fragile corals; because it is illegal to spearfish, collect fish, shells, coral or even lobster, Looe Key is a fabulous ecosystem.

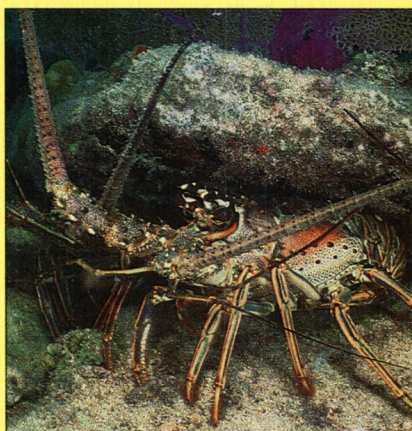
For many motorists, the Overseas Highway is perceived as a direct route to Key West, the most sophisticated and his-

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Key West



torically significant of the Florida Keys. As Joy Williams relates in her guidebook, logically entitled *The Florida Keys*, "Key West is now a tourist town, one million people visit it each year, but it is still a town of contrast and contradictions, threat and carelessness and charm. The bars should be sampled, of course, and the reef investigated. The gold should be seen and the forts and the galleries. One should dance or stand on one of the balconies that line Duval and watch the prowl of the street. The beaches should be duly attended and a tan obtained. The yellowtail stuffed with crab-meat should be eaten, and conch fritters, and since you must, Key Lime pie.... One should be in the water, and travel over and on the water as much as possible."

For those who prefer to be under the water, local dive professionals offer daily tours to famed shipwrecks such as the **Cayman Salvager**, a 180 foot steel hulled buoy tender sunk in 1985. The ship itself is of interest—despite being shorn of its superstructure prior to sinking—but it is its ability to attract fish that makes the *Cayman Salvager* a first class dive. The holds are frequently filled with baitfish and the resident Green Moray and Jewfish have posed for countless underwater photos. Nor will reef divers be disappointed. With high profile formations of Elkhorn, Brain and Star Corals dotting such perennial favorites as the Western, Middle and Eastern Sambos, Western Dry Rock and Ten Fathom Ledge, there is plenty to satisfy hardcore dive enthusiasts.

The Florida Keys are easily accessible via automobile, of course, but those who prefer to fly will do well to choose **AMERICAN AIRLINES**, *Something Special to the Florida Keys*, to Miami with connecting flights on **AMERICAN EAGLE** to Marathon or Key West. For reservations, just call (800) 433-7300. Visit our **WEB SITE** at <http://www.fl-keys.com> or call (800) FLA-KEYS for more information.

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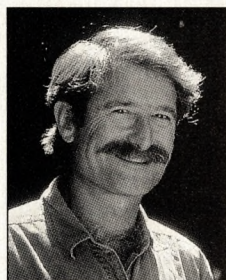


Getting Started...

Snorkeler's Perspective

Snorkeling Tourbook's Premiere

BY JOEL SIMON



Welcome to the Snorkeling Tourbook. In this new section of SKIN DIVER Magazine we invite you to gain an appreciation of the snorkeler's view of our aquatic world. Snorkelers comprise one of the fastest growing segments of the diving industry and rightfully so. Snorkeling is a safe, easy and enjoyable activity for all age and skill levels and is ideal for families. Through snorkeling, the underwater world becomes accessible without the need for heavy scuba gear or special certification. Simply put on a mask, dip your face beneath the surface and you can open an unforgettable window to a world of wonder.

That window was opened for me as a child in Southern California and it has never closed. My first snorkeling experiences allowed me to watch small fish swim around barnacle encrusted pilings, see a small octopus watching me from inside an old soft drink bottle and play with translucent tube anemones emerging from the muddy bottom of Long Beach's Alamitos Bay. Eventually, I was certified as an open water diver in 1969 and as a NAUI instructor in 1977. Academic studies in marine biology at Stanford University led to teaching positions in the Caribbean, which in turn led to instructional roles on more than 100 organized educational tours worldwide.

During the last 15 years it has been my privilege to introduce literally thousands of people to the joys of snorkeling and the marvels of tropical coral reef ecology. Resonant squeals of delight burst through snorkels as people view their first cleaning station, squadron of squid, camouflaged Peacock Flounder or anemonefish. Just as much enthusiasm and appreciation for the oceans can be generated from the surface as from below.

Each month the Snorkeling Tourbook will examine a range of topics of special interest

to snorkelers. In Life on a Shallow Reef we will adopt a snorkeler's perspective, concentrating on the wealth of creatures that thrive in relatively shallow water, including tips on how to best locate and observe those whose survival often depends on their cryptic nature. In addition to species identification, we will highlight easily observable behaviors of fish and invertebrates: interactions, color changes and close examination of habitat.


We plan to provide detailed descriptions of many exciting snorkeling environments, including mangroves, freshwater estuaries, lakes and warm water springs, in addition to tropical fringing reefs, atolls and lagoons.

Snorkeling Tips will be devoted to snorkeling skills, from the very simple to the complex: mask clearing, breathing and breath-holding skills, night snorkeling and safety precautions to name a few.

Snorkeler's Gearbag will keep you informed about the latest equipment appropriate for snorkeling.

Our Snorkeler's Perspective editorials will discuss such touchy subjects as the use of gloves, the relationship between snorkelers and scuba divers and snorkeling for young children, mature adults and the handicapped.

As snorkeling becomes an increasingly important component of "dive" travel, Bon Voyage will feature the world's premier shallow water destinations and resorts that are developing services specially designed to cater to the distinct needs of those on a snorkeling holiday.

Today, many opportunities are available for appreciating the beauty and wonder of our aquatic wilderness: excellent television documentaries and films, a growing number of superb aquariums and interpretative facilities, and many outstanding books and periodicals. Yet the best way to appreciate the underwater world is by getting wet and seeing it for yourself. Snorkeling is one of the easiest, safest and most delightful ways to enjoy the water. We invite you, through the pages of the Snorkeling Tourbook, to adventure with us. 

Inside Snorkeling Tourbook

Brought to you by:

Joel Simon, **Editor**

Tamara Collins, **Executive Editor**

Susan Grube, **Art Director**

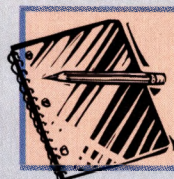
Stephen Frink, **Contributing Editor**

Snorkeler's Gearbag



*Breathe Easy:
Three Snorkels
and a
Safety Flag*

Tips and Techniques



*The Basics:
For Calm
Confidence in
the Water*

Life on a Shallow Reef



*The Fishes of
the Caribbean:
An
Introduction*

Bon Voyage



*Bonaire:
12 Pioneers
in Guided
Snorkeling*



Breathe Easy: Three Snorkels and a Safety Flag

BY TAMARA COLLINS

Floating in the water, face down and immersed in a new world, you may not be aware of your surroundings—just as others may be oblivious to you. Whether you are snorkeling alone or in a group with a guide, you will want your position well known and unmistakable to boaters, jet skiers, other snorkelers or your companions on the beach or boat.

With **Diver's Diversions' Snorkel Safety Flag** 19 inches above your snorkel, your vulnerability will be greatly decreased. The bright red flag can be attached to all snorkels via adjustable snorkel keeper rings. It is especially convenient for snorkeling guides who need an easy, sure method of being visible to their group.

IN BRIEF

Sea Quest's Horizon

Features: Simple J snorkel; swiveling mouthpiece
Size/weight: 15 inches/2½ ounces
Colors: Blue, pink and lime
Price: \$7.50
Phone: (619) 438-1101

Enveloped by water, eyes and nose encased in glass and silicone, a snorkeler's only link to the air above is, of course, the snorkel. You will want to choose the one with the price you can afford and features you desire. Some popular low, middle and high end snorkels are introduced below.

Sea Quest's Horizon: Compared to snorkels with vents and drains, the J is perhaps the most difficult type to clear water

from. The Horizon is stripped down and simplified to keep the cost low but there are a few features for comfort. The lightweight, plastic barrel connects to a

IN BRIEF

Mares' Flexstream

Features: Plastic, quick-connect snorkel keeper; drop-away mouthpiece; self-draining purge/drain valve
Size/weight: 17 inches/6 ounces
Colors: Pink, red, lime, clear, blue and black
Price: \$26.50
Phone: (800) 874-3236

swiveling silicone tube and soft silicone mouthpiece with bite tabs. The snorkel attaches to the mask via a plastic holder built into the inside of the barrel.

Mares' Flexstream: A large bore, curved barrel, drop-away mouthpiece, self-draining purge/drain valve and quick-connect snorkel keeper bring a range of benefits and additional comfort to the Flexstream. This snorkel is easier to breathe through than the J and much easier to clear (a valve below the mouthpiece drains excess water when surfacing). The flexible, corrugated silicone tube at the base of the barrel allows the mouthpiece to drop away when not in use. An adjustable plastic snorkel keeper facilitates quick attachment to the mask.

The hypoallergenic mouthpiece is soft and includes bite tabs for comfort.

U.S. Divers' Impulse: If you like modern innovation and are willing to pay for it, the Impulse is for you. To facilitate purging, there is a one-way annular drain valve. When water enters the top of the barrel, a valve



IN BRIEF

Diver's Diversions' Snorkel Safety Flag

Features: Vinyl waterproof flag; bendable PVC flagstick; adjustable snorkel keeper rings
Size/weight: 8¾ by 6½ inch flag, 19 inches high/1½ ounces
Price: \$10.95
Phone: (305) 937-6212

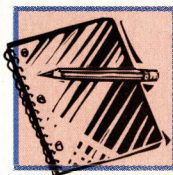
opens, allowing most of the water to drain from the bottom before it reaches the mouthpiece. Any residual water is contained in a reservoir below the mouthpiece, where it is purged through a self-draining valve. An adjustable quick-connect plastic clip holds

IN BRIEF

U.S. Divers' Impulse

Features: Annular drain valve; self-draining purge valve; quick-connect snorkel keeper; Comfo-Bite mouthpiece
Size/weight: 20 inches/5½ ounces
Colors: Various
Price: \$47
Phone: (714) 540-8010

the mask strap. The barrel is contoured to reduce drag through the water and place the mouthpiece at the correct angle; the mouthpiece housing swivels. The patented Comfo-Bite silicone mouthpiece is supremely comfortable and easy to retain, significantly reducing jaw fatigue.



The Basics: For Calm Confidence in the Water

BY JOEL SIMON

PHOTOGRAPHY BY BILL GLEASON

Many people assume snorkeling is so easy that little or no instruction is needed to master the skill. This simply isn't true. In addition to learning the fit and use of equipment, many snorkelers must deal with more sophisticated issues: long term fear of the water, feelings of claustrophobia or lack of swimming ability.

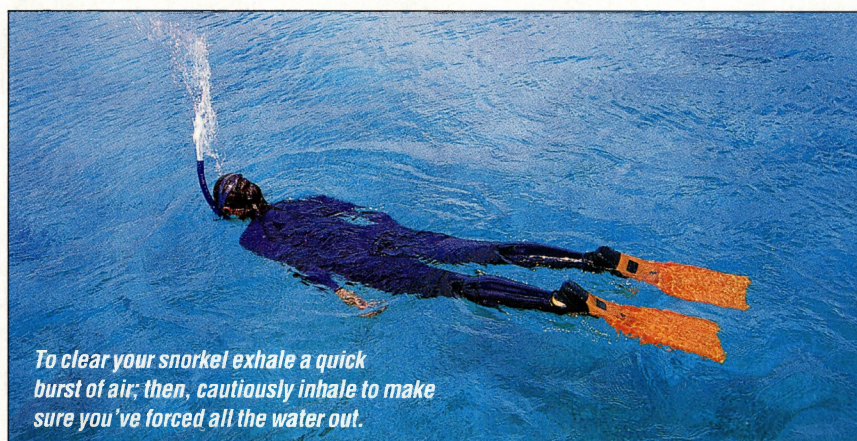
Snorkeling is perhaps the easiest method of immersing oneself in a true wilderness environment. It's safe, easy, enjoyable and relaxing. Clearly, a little snorkeling instruction can be invaluable in developing calm confidence in the water. Scuba divers, too, can benefit by honing their skills; relaxation in the water is a shared goal. Whether you are a novice or an expert, the following tips should prove useful in your snorkeling activities.

SNORKELING TECHNIQUES

Quite often, becoming comfortable in the water involves as much psychology as physical skill development. On land we can breathe through our nose. With a mask and snorkel breathing is by mouth only. When we place our faces underwater, all our well-earned survival instincts are saying, "Don't do this, silly. I need air to live!"

As a child, I remember practicing breathing through a snorkel while watching television. Even after mastering calm, even breaths in a swimming pool, I had to literally force myself to inhale, against my better judgement, during my first forays into the open sea.

Begin by learning how to use the equipment. When you put on your mask for



To clear your snorkel exhale a quick burst of air; then, cautiously inhale to make sure you've forced all the water out.

snorkeling, be sure it seals well around your entire face; brush all your hair back and, if you're wearing a bathing cap, be sure it doesn't interfere with the mask's edge. Condensation may form on the inner surface. Fortunately, mask clouding is easily avoided by swishing a little saliva or commercially available anti-fogging solution on the inside of the glass before going in the water each time. Sometimes new masks have a protective film that is best removed with a very light abrasive. Some people effectively use toothpaste. It's best to avoid putting suntan lotion on your nose or face when snorkeling because the water can occasionally flush some into your eyes.

Your snorkel essentially transfers your mouth to the back of your head permitting you to breathe while floating face down in the water. This is a novel experience for most of us. It may help to first use the snorkel out of the water, progressing to a pool or calm, shallow water as you become more comfortable.

Beginners are encouraged to develop their



Adjust the snorkel for a comfortable fit before entering the water.

skills by deliberately flooding their masks and snorkels while still in shallow water. Dip your head down until you hear and feel water entering the snorkel. How do you clear the water from a flooded snorkel or mask? When all else fails, a mask and snorkel come off as easily as they go on. There are, however, other more commonly used methods. For the snorkel, exhale a burst of air through your mouth, breathing in cautiously at first to make sure you've forced all the water out. To clear a flooded mask, place your hand on the

upper edge of the mask, tilt your head back at a 45 degree angle, or turn your head sideways, and blow air through your nose until the water is eliminated.

Fins are great in the water, but awkward as snowshoes on land. If you're going to a snorkeling area from a calm beach, try putting on your fins in waist deep water. Snorkeling companions can help one another maintain balance. On boats, fins are usually put on at the dive platform and taken off before climbing up a ladder. While fins can facilitate fast swimming, their greatest asset is increased efficiency. Used gently, they let you glide nearly effortlessly along the surface, keeping your body in a relaxing horizontal position. Not only does this help keep your snorkel above water but it keeps your face looking down comfortably. Remember to look where you're going every now and then to avoid bumping into a boat, parts of the reef or your friends!

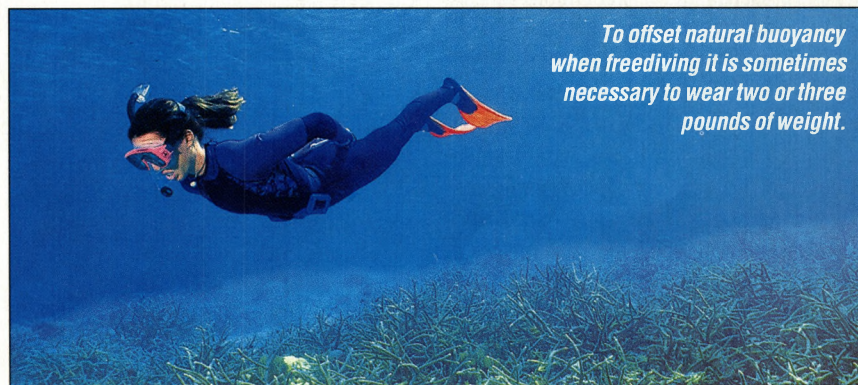
Rather than zoom around the entire area, many snorkelers find that once they locate an interesting area, a shallow coral head for example, they actually see much more by floating quietly in one place. Many reef creatures rely on cryptic coloration for survival and are only noticed upon careful observation. If you relax in one place, small fish and other reef life become accustomed to your presence, realize you are not a link in their food chain and come out of hiding to resume their normal routine.

With fins, propulsion is by easy, gentle kicking. You rarely need to use your arms—let them rest comfortably by your side or float one in front of your head to act as a bumper. To move through the water kick with your knees and ankles loose. Gently lead your fins up and down and allow the pressure to flex your joints. This lets your muscles expand and contract, promotes muscular respiration, diminishes lactic acid buildup and makes your legs far less susceptible to cramps.

Once you're comfortable on the surface, you may wish to swim down and take a closer look. Many of the most interesting aspects of the reef are small. Tiny translucent shrimps and crabs dwell safely in the protective tentacles of large anemones and little fish often hide in coral crevices. Venturing into the underwater world isn't difficult but it takes some practice.

Here's how: Relax at the surface, breathing normally. Take a breath and hold it. Bend at the waist so your head is pointing down, lift your legs above your head and use your arms to help start your downward motion,

then continue by kicking your legs. Now the most important part: equalizing your ears. As you swim downward and before you feel any pressure, put a hand to the nosepiece of your mask and squeeze your nostrils closed. At the same time, try to gently blow some air through your nose—of course, no air should come out because of your squeezed nostrils. This will equalize your ears. Continue to equalize your ears as long as you descend. If you feel any pain, come up and try again. Equalizing your ears is a necessary part of freediving and, when done early and often, will prevent any pain or damage to your



eardrums. Sometimes sinuses may be congested, especially if you have a cold or allergies. This can hinder equalization and be dangerous for your ears. Over the counter medications can help if taken as directed before snorkeling.

While underwater, stay relaxed! The more relaxed you are, the longer you can stay down. When you ascend, look up and watch where you're going, not where you've been. Upon arrival at the surface, clear your snorkel with a

burst of air, then cautiously breath in. Your freediving skills will improve with practice.

Relaxed snorkelers stay underwater longer and more thoroughly enjoy the experience. One easy relaxation technique is the development of an even, regular breathing pattern in the water.

Probably the most important responsibility is to listen to and abide by your personal limitations. Much will depend on water temperature, surge or current conditions, how much sleep you may have had the night before or how much snorkeling you've already done that day. Individually, each of us knows best what our limitations are on any given day and we must be responsive to those messages.

With relaxation in mind, another precaution is simply to move slowly. Most injuries are caused by reflex actions that bang extremities into relatively immovable objects: boats, reefs, piers, etc. Incidentally, even small scrapes in the tropics, especially coral cuts, can become easily infected. Be sure to clean all cuts very thoroughly and apply a little antibiotic cream to help them heal more quickly.

While many people measure snorkeling skills by how long they can stay in the water, how fast they can kick, how deep they can freedive or how long they can stay beneath the surface, the real measure of skill is the ability to remain relaxed. Don't get discouraged if it feels a bit awkward in the beginning. Set your own pace. Like many other skills,

snorkeling requires training and the more you do, the better you will get. Developing and maintaining a calm, easy demeanor in the water will be your best key to unlocking the treasure chest of fascinating mysteries contained within the underwater world.

In upcoming issues I will examine these and other snorkeling techniques in greater detail but, until then, I hope that these tips will prove useful in furthering your snorkeling enjoyment.



The Fishes of the Caribbean: An Introduction

BY BILL GLEASON
AND STEPHEN FRINK

Of all the activities snorkelers can enjoy, fishwatching is probably the most enthralling. There are, after all, hundreds of species of fish to observe in Caribbean waters and more than 150 are seen regularly by snorkelers. It's not that difficult to identify fish but there are a few basic guidelines that can help you get started. Each month, we will present several fish (and other types of marine life), describe their behavior and habitat. This month, we introduce you to fishwatching and present some very common reef fish with uncommon behaviors.

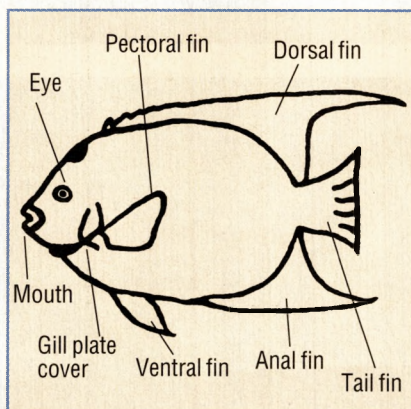
There are distinct day and night shifts on any coral reef. Those fish swimming freely during the day are usually in search of food or protecting their territories. Fish that hide under coral overhangs or crevices during the day are members of the night shift. Dawn and dusk are the "rush" hours of the coral reef, when feeding and reproduction (only at dusk) take place. What a fish does during the day becomes a key behavior point and can help in identifying the particular species.

The second major consideration is shape and body parts. Fish range from long and thin to short and stout. Some are triangular (Trunkfish, for example) and others, such as the Balloonfish, are nearly round. Oval shapes and odd shapes abound. The size of a fish is also important—six inches, a foot or three feet makes a huge difference in species identification.

A fish's color is often the first thing noticed. Color can be misleading, though, since nearly all fish change color during mating,

territorial defense, hunting and nesting. Color is just a guideline. Individual markings are more significant and are excellent ways to identify fish. Fish often change both color and markings as they grow from juveniles to adults, adding another layer of complexity to the identification game.

Identification is only the first step in getting to know fish. Learning about a fish's behavior, especially its diet, is the next step in the familiarization process. Take a look at the four fish on the opposite page. Although they



are all approximately the same size and found in the same shallow areas, all have extremely different diets. The angelfish and butterflyfish appear to have the same behavior, swimming around rather majestically and stopping to peck or nibble on parts of the reef. We might assume they eat the same thing. Absolutely not. The angels feast on sponges and the butterflyfishes on tube worms and colonial sea anemones. Likewise, the Blue Tangs only eat algae and the French Grunts (nighttime feeders) feed on small crustaceans on the bottom. When you know what a fish eats, you

can start to make sense of when it's feeding and when it's defending its territory.

The best way to fishwatch is to study a small section of the reef while staying motionless. Find a particular fish and slowly follow it around. You'll be fascinated at its range of behaviors. Sometimes it'll stop at certain areas of the reef and assume a rather rigid posture, with its mouth open. This behavior invites small fish and shrimp to clean parasites off its body. By some unwritten law of nature, the small fish are immune to predators during this activity.

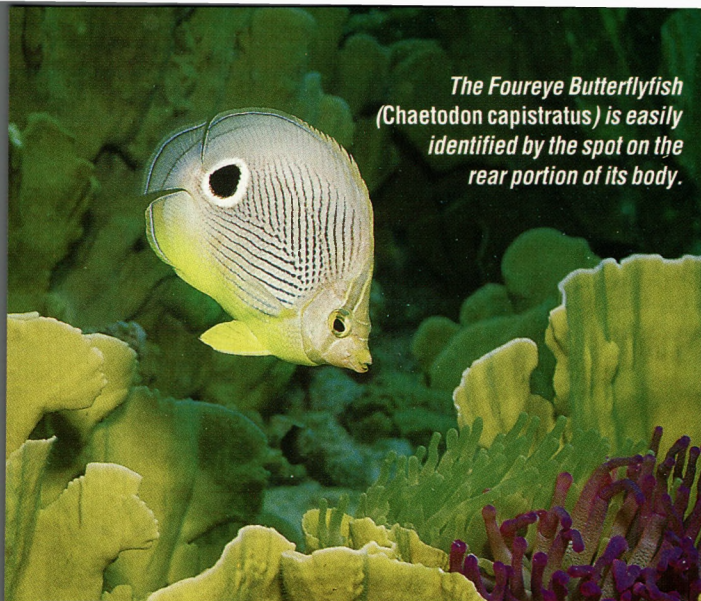
A wealth of fish information is available in the form of slates and books dedicated to fish identification. The bible of fishwatching and fish I.D. is *Reef Fish Identification*, by Paul Humann and Ned DeLoach—a wonderful guide.

[Editor's Note: Fish are grouped according to family and common name in English. In classic marine biology, there is a family (shared behavior), genus (shared body characteristics) and species (individual coloration and specific points of physiological difference).]

Foureye Butterflyfish (*Chaetodon capistratus*). Family: Butterflyfish—Chaetodontidae.

The Foureye Butterflyfish is one of the Caribbean's most distinctive fish. In addition to its unusual shape, this butterflyfish is easily identified by the ocellus or spot on the rear portion of its body. This false eye is thought to confuse predators, leading them to attack the wrong end of the fish and giving it an easy escape route. Many juveniles have false eyes but they usually outgrow them as they mature—Foureyes keep them for life.

During the day, Foureyes leisurely cruise



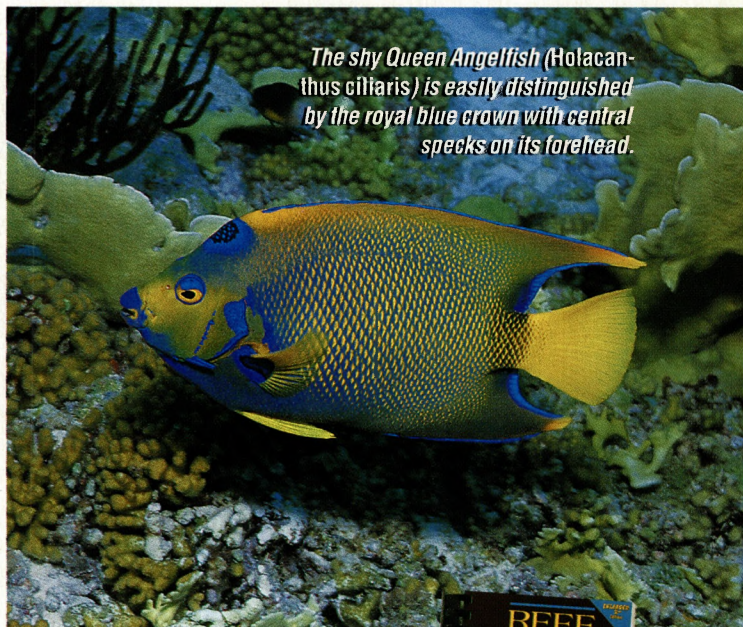
The Four-eye Butterflyfish (*Chaetodon capistratus*) is easily identified by the spot on the rear portion of its body.



The remarkably common French Grunt (*Haemulon flavolineatum*) was named for the audible grunt it produces when threatened.



Blue Tangs (*Acanthurus coeruleus*) are often seen in large groups foraging for algae among shallow reefs.



The shy Queen Angelfish (*Holacanthus ciliaris*) is easily distinguished by the royal blue crown with central specks on its forehead.

the reef in search of food—tube worms and colonial sea anemones. Their odd shaped mouths are perfect for searching crevices to find food.

Foureyes are usually found in pairs and apparently mate for life. During reproduction, the female launches herself toward the surface, followed by the male. At the top of this graceful arc the female releases her eggs, which are then fertilized by the male.

Blue Tangs (*Acanthurus coeruleus*).
Family: Surgeonfish—Acanthuridae.

Although these small (six to eight inch) fish are graceful and pretty, all members of the Surgeonfish family have a highly developed natural defense mechanism. The yellow fin at the base of the tail is razor sharp and can extend from the body to slash a predator! Blue Tangs are vegetarians, feeding during the day on algae that grows in dead areas of the reef.

They often forage for food in schools.

Queen Angelfish (*Holacanthus ciliaris*).
Family: Angelfish—Pomacanthidae.

These majestic fish are some of the most dramatically colored in the Caribbean. They may appear shy at first but will often observe snorkelers at a close range. These daytime feeders primarily eat sponges. They also eat tunicates and algae. They are usually around a foot long, larger individuals are found on occasion.

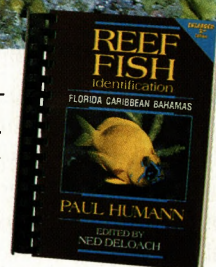
Angelfish males are territorial, with the dominant male establishing a courtship area. Males can be identified by their white pelvic fins; the females' are smaller and yellow. A male may entertain more than one female, suggesting a harem arrangement, but angelfish are often observed in pairs. Eggs are released in mid-water by females and fertilized by the male.

French Grunt (*Haemulon flavolineatum*).
Family: Grunt—Haemulidae.

French Grunts are some of the most common fish found in shallow water. During the day, large schools remain motionless near or under some type of coral shelter. They are wary of snorkelers and will generally keep their distance.

These small fish (six to ten inches) are members of the night shift. At dusk, the schools separate and individuals forage for food, typically crustaceans and invertebrates.

Grunts were named for their ability to grind their upper and lower jaws together, producing an audible "grunt"—a defensive or aggressive behavior.





Bonaire: 12 Pioneers in Guided Snorkeling

BY BILL GLEASON
AND STEPHEN FRINK

The most exciting event in the snorkeling world is taking place on the Dutch Caribbean island of Bonaire. The government, hotels and watersport operators

have been planning and developing this project for the last two years. In April, they unveiled the island's newest offering: Guided Snorkeling! The program

is part education and part fun. Bonaire is the first island in the world to offer this type of dedicated service to visiting snorkelers.

At the heart of the program is a series of one-half hour slide shows (12 in all). Each mini-lecture is held in the comfort of a classroom and gives visitors information on fish, invertebrates, coral reef ecology and the specifics of the site they will visit. At the same time, working with the Bonaire Marine Park, they have identified 12 different areas offering the very best snorkeling. These sites can be explored either by a short boat trip or land based transportation. Twelve resorts on Bonaire have adopted the program and begun offering daily (some twice daily) Guided Snorkeling Tours.

The complete details of the Bonaire Guided Snorkeling Program are enclosed in the following eight pages and will answer any and all questions about how to participate and

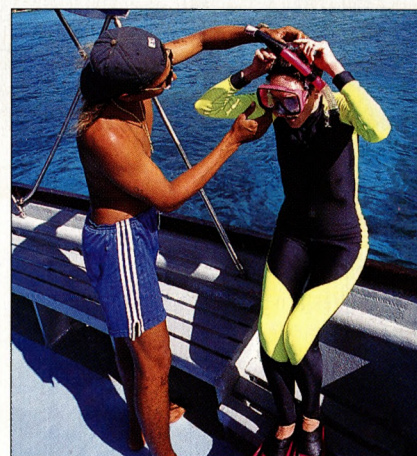
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who to contact for more information or reservations. But a little background information on the island will help put it all together.

Bonaire is in the southernmost part of the Caribbean (outside of the hurricane belt) and blessed with year-round trade winds and sunshine. It has a predictable climate. Part of the Dutch Netherlands Antilles, the island's residents speak Papiamentu, in addition to English, Dutch and Spanish. Bonaire is a low-lying island with a desert climate. The main town, Kralendijk, is the island's capital. The pace is quiet, relaxed and laidback. Its beaches are small and tucked away; ironshore marks much of the coast. Thanks to the trade winds that come from the east, the entire western side of Bonaire is always calm—perfect conditions for divers and snorkelers.

Over the years, as diving became popular, many of the resorts began to cater to divers and became experts at providing guides, boats and airfills. These same operators decided to offer snorkelers their own dedicated boats, special guides and all the amenities. Morning and afternoon trips, and even a



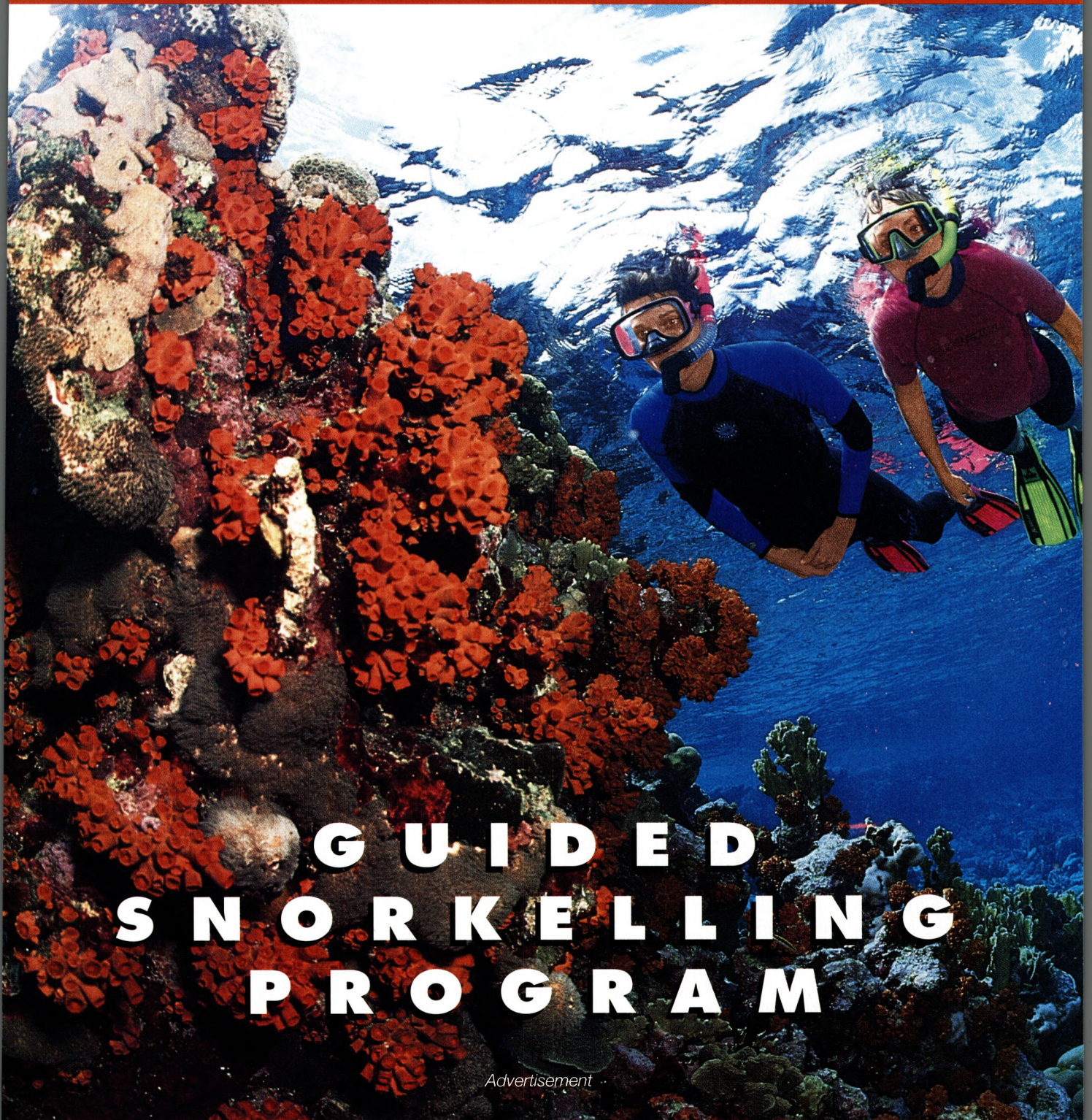
Top: Rincon. Above: Bonaire's comprehensive Guided Snorkeling Program features outstanding guided tours and services.

night snorkel, are available under the friendly and expert eyes of a guide.

Bonaire's 12 operators, island government, hotels and Marine Park deserve a tremendous thank you from snorkelers for pioneering this very special way to visit and appreciate the island's exquisite coral reefs. 🐠

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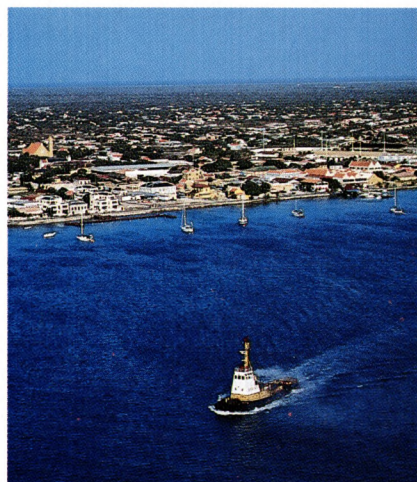
With world-class reefs beginning right offshore, snorkellers can effortlessly explore many shallow coral gardens.



Top: The enthusiasm of snorkelling is shared by visitors of all ages. Above: The Bonaire Guided Snorkelling Program has selected the island's very best sites



Above: The arid, desert climate of Bonaire and Klein Bonaire preserves the pristine shallow reefs, which border the islands, from siltation caused by rain water runoff. Below: A parasail provides the ultimate view of Kralendijk and the captivating blue waters that lap its shores.



Welcome to safe, guided tours for snorkellers of all ages...

The Dutch Caribbean island of Bonaire, in the southern Caribbean Sea, is the scene of one of the most ambitious snorkelling projects ever designed. Bonaire, long world famous among scuba divers, has created its own program—Bonaire Guided Snorkelling—and laid out a red carpet of services for visitors. The pristine coral reefs of Bonaire, which begin just inches from its shoreline, are the highlight of any vacation. With Bonaire Guided Snorkelling, you're guaranteed to learn more about the wonders of the coral reef, amuse yourself for hours underwater and visit more than a dozen different and unique snorkelling sites.

Bonaire has created (and put into operation this past April 15) the most unique island-wide snorkelling program in the world. While traditional snorkelling programs pretty much hand you the mask, snorkel and fins and wave good-bye, the Bonaire Guided Snorkelling Program is a series of 12 different Guided Tours to carefully selected sites around the main island of Bonaire and its adjacent small island, Klein ("little" in Dutch) Bonaire. Not only are the water portions of these tours guided but each one actually begins with a fun, informative slide show to help you

learn about all aspects of the coral reef and the animals that inhabit it. So, before you ever put on your mask, fins or snorkel, you'll be learning all about the wonderful world of the coral reef, an ecosystem only matched by rain forests in terms of natural beauty and diversity.

At the heart of the Bonaire program is a team of more than 30 trained Snorkel Guides. In addition to lifesaving, water rescue and first aid skills, these professional guides have also been trained as underwater naturalists and are eager to help you discover the more than 150 different types of fish, 30 different types of corals and many other types of marine life that live on Bonaire's lush reefs.

BONAIRE REEFS

Nature has blessed Bonaire with gorgeous coral reefs. While this is not necessarily rare in the Caribbean, Bonaire's reefs are unique in that they start in just inches of water and therefore have dense coral formations in very shallow water. To a snorkeller, this is underwater paradise, and all of the Snorkel Tours are designed to be conducted in 15 feet of water or less. Scientists call these types of reefs fringing reefs, since the corals have literally grown right on the side of the island

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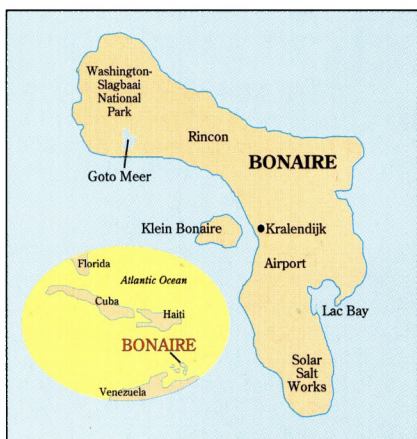


Serene Elkhorn Coral gardens in less than 15 feet of water, inhabited by grunts, damselfish and other reef tropicals, are to be expected by Bonaire's snorkellers.

over the millennia. As the island has risen and fallen, the coral reefs have continued to grow. Evidence of their prolific growth is easy to see on your very first snorkelling expedition. As you travel around the island (particularly in the northern area) you will see ample evidence of prehistoric reefs now 30 to 40 feet above sea level, having lived submerged for hundreds of thousands of years and then uplifted as the island slowly rose.

BONAIRE WEATHER

Bonaire is blessed with one of the gentlest climates in the Caribbean, with very little rainfall (less than 22 inches annually) and a prevailing easterly trade wind that provides a consistent 15 mph breeze. This trade wind is also one of the coral



reefs' best friends and a major reason these reefs are among the most prolific in the world. When the wind blows continuously from the same direction, one side of the island has "rough" water conditions (the windward side; the other side (the leeward side) is almost always calm. Since Bonaire lies at a 90 degree angle to its trade winds, the island's western side

GETTING STARTED

All participants in the Bonaire Guided Snorkelling Program start with an introduction, which consists (as do the Snorkel Tours) of a Slide Show Briefing and in-water review of snorkelling skills. The Slide Show explains how the program works at the resort at which you are staying. It tells you what time the snorkel boats depart and when the individual tours are scheduled, as well as answering any questions you might have.

After the briefing, everyone heads to the water for a quick review of snorkelling skills and a briefing on the snorkelling attractions found directly off the hotel. If you have never snorkelled, you will be shown the basics. If you are already a snorkeller, the guides will show you a couple of advanced tips. Beginners and advanced snorkellers can review:

1. Proper equipment and fit. This is absolutely essential to enjoying yourself on a snorkelling vacation. A good mask (optically corrected if you wear glasses) is a must. You also need a comfortable snorkel and fins that match your strength and swimming style. You'll find out how to keep your mask fog free and how to correctly clear both your mask and snorkel.

2. Snorkelling vests (flotation vests). This is an increasingly popular piece of equipment among advanced snorkellers. There are lead weights for people who want to get a little more serious about freediving or underwater swimming. Techniques are demonstrated as well.

3. Safe entry and exit practices. Tours are conducted from boats and from shore, so becoming familiar with ladders and boats is a must.

The guides will also introduce you to the island wide concept of Responsible Snorkelling, a code for snorkellers that seeks to minimize damage a snorkeller might do to the coral reefs. This includes maintaining a horizontal position nearly all of the time and making sure fins don't accidentally come in contact with the bottom.

You'll also find out about Bonaire's fishwatching program, where snorkellers get a slate and the opportunity to identify more than 100 of the most common reef fish. Every snorkel trip gives you the op-



portunity to find and record new sightings; the guides are very helpful in finding various species of fish!

DANGEROUS MARINE LIFE



identify anything that can remotely harm you. You'll also find if you don't touch anything, nothing's going to touch you! There's nothing to fear from sharks (rarely seen in Bonaire) and you'll learn that Barracuda are curious, not dangerous. The moray eel is reclusive and poses no threat at all.

Popular TV stereotypes about sharks, Barracuda and moray eels lead many people to believe the ocean teems with dangerous marine life. Bonaire's Guided Snorkelling Program will give you the real story. You'll be delighted to know that marine life poses no danger to snorkellers, unless you come in contact with corals or a sea urchin. You'll learn to

BONAIRE SNORKELLING SLIDE SHOWS



At the heart of the Bonaire Guided Snorkelling Program is a series of Slide Shows that begin each snorkelling tour. They are given at participating resorts (some 12 different resorts on Bonaire operate these special programs), usually in a comfortable classroom. Approximately one-half hour long, they are a combination of coral reef information and a sneak preview of what you will see when snorkelling at each of the 12 different Bonaire sites. The shows have been designed specifically for snorkellers of all ages and all of the photog-



raphy in the shows comes from the actual sites around the island. You have already read about the first one, Introduction to Guided Snorkelling. Here's a look at what you will learn in the other shows:

THE CORAL REEF: Gives an overview of the Coral Reef, its inhabitants and facts about the coral polyp, the basic building block of coral reefs.

BASIC FISH IDENTIFICATION, INTERMEDIATE FISH IDENTIFICATION, ADVANCED FISH IDENTIFICATION I AND II: These four shows highlight the different types of common reef fish seen by snorkellers off Bonaire and help visitors get to know their names

and habits. Fishwatching is a popular snorkelling pastime. With more than 150 different species, there's plenty to learn! A series of Identification Slates and books are available at the resorts.

INTRODUCTION TO CORALS: This explains what types of corals make up a reef and the different roles they play.

INVERTEBRATES: More than 85 percent of all life on a coral reef (including the corals themselves) falls into this category!

MARINE BEHAVIOR I AND II: Here you'll watch the interaction of fish and the interdependence of many life forms on the



reef. You'll learn common tricks fish play on us and how they camouflage themselves for both protection and predation.

NIGHT SNORKELLING: At night, with the aid of special lights (available at the resorts), you will find an entirely different set of reef inhabitants and colors. This is one of the most popular and exciting snorkel tours!

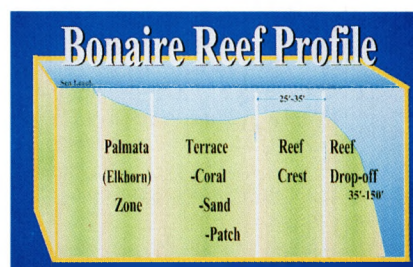
THE MANGROVES: This is the juvenile nursery of the coral reef and an adventure for all snorkellers.

The Slide Shows help you learn about all aspects of the coral reef and increase your ability to spot marine life when snorkelling.

(where you'll find all of the guided snorkelling resorts and all snorkelling operations) is always calm and protected. Not only does this provide perfect snorkelling conditions about 99 percent (no exaggeration) of the time, it also allows corals to grow prolifically in shallow water (rough water tends to knock some of the corals over, preventing them from attaining full growth). The low rainfall on Bonaire is also a blessing, since fresh water from rivers (there are no rivers on Bonaire) and rain runoff are enemies of the coral reef. Freshwater runoff almost always contains sediments, which can harm the coral by literally smothering it.

THE CORAL TERRACES

As the Reef Profile indicates, the fringing reefs of Bonaire can be divided into four distinct zones. Three are commonly visited by snorkellers and the fourth is the typical province of scuba divers, another large component of Bonaire visitors. Here's a breakdown of those four areas:



THE ELKHORN ZONE. Named for the large, dominant coral formations, this is the area closest to shore. You'll find these giant, branching corals (many measure more than ten feet across) in just a few feet of water. Home to thousands of fish and marine life, they provide a refuge and habitat for life on the coral reef.

THE CORAL TERRACES. After the Elkhorn Zone, the bottom (in about 8 to 10 feet of water) undergoes a dramatic change. The Elkhorn Corals are replaced by a combination of other corals. Some areas are densely packed, others have sandy bottoms with just patches of coral. These are called terraces. Bonaire offers three different types of terraces: Sandy, Patch (both Brain Coral and Staghorn Corals) and Coral.

The Sandy Terraces are mostly sand, with just an occasional coral. Your guides will be able to point out (and show you in the slide presentations) a great number of interesting fish (the Sand Diver and Peacock Flounder among them), usually found resting, camouflaged, on the sand. Spotting these fish without a guide is pretty tough but once you see your first one, you'll find them on nearly every snorkel trip you make!



The Patch Terraces are a mixture of sand and two dominant types of corals; either Brain (which looks exactly like its name and can be only inches across or as large as five feet) or Staghorn, a thin, branching coral that can cover large areas. Both habitats support a wide array of marine life.

Off northern Bonaire and around Klein Bonaire you'll find Coral Terraces, where the corals are so densely packed it's hard to see anything but the corals and the fish living in these areas! All snorkel sites are not created equal and those off Bonaire were chosen to provide a visitor with examples of the diversity of the coral reef, since each terrace supports different types of life.

THE REEF CREST. Also called the top of the drop-off, the reef crest is in about 25 to 30 feet of water. However, the water in Bonaire is so clear you can easily observe it while snorkelling. Not only does coral begin to dominate here, there's plenty of action above the reef as well. Schools of fish, often feeding on the plankton drifting by, will always be seen. And, there are other fish that feed on those fish (such as jacks), so you'll see them as well!

THE REEF DROP-OFF. Starting in 30 feet of water, the reefs of Bonaire drop-off suddenly to great depths (usually 150 feet or more) and this is what lures scuba divers to the island. Although scuba is necessary to explore these deeper areas, the shallow areas of Bonaire's snorkelling reefs will allow you to see at least 80 percent of the marine life with just a mask, fins, snorkel and guide.

SNORKELLING OPERATIONS

The new Guided Snorkelling Program has elevated snorkellers to first class citizenship and provides a variety of services

not found elsewhere in the travel world:

DEDICATED SNORKELLING BOATS: On Bonaire, boats are dedicated to snorkellers and quickly get you to your snorkel site (the farthest sites are 20 minutes away, the closest less than 10).

DEDICATED SNORKEL BRIEFINGS: The Bonaire Guided Snorkelling Operators provide a one-half hour Slide Show/Lecture before each trip, helping you learn more about the coral reef before you even get there. These are not academic but designed to be fun as well as informative. The trained guides are all veteran fish and reef watchers; more than happy to share snorkelling tips and techniques with you, as well as introduce

The vitality and diversity of life on this shallow coral head are a result of the protection of the Bonaire Marine Park.

you to the marine life.

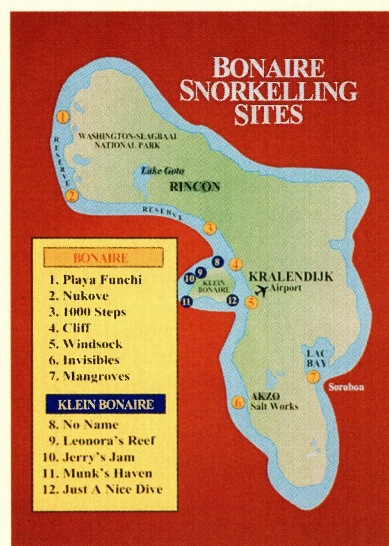
CUSTOM SCHEDULING: Bonaire operators offer Guided Snorkelling Tours from one to three times a day, depending on the operation and number of snorkellers. The boats are restricted in capacity, so even the large boats only carry a maximum of 20 snorkellers. A normal sized group is 8 to 12. The cost for the program runs about \$20 per tour, including lecture and transportation. Snorkel equipment may be extra (nearly all snorkellers bring their own). Snorkelling equipment and accessories are widely available on the island should you forget your gear. Rental charges are modest but you should contact the individual resorts for exact pricing.

BONAIRE STYLE

While the snorkelling off Bonaire is indeed world-class and the new Guided Snorkelling Program in a class by itself by world travel standards, frequent visitors to this small Dutch Caribbean island (just three hours out of Miami by jet) echo the same sentiments: It's a quiet, tranquil island, with a friendly, casual style (you would never bring a coat and tie to Bonaire). This is not the land of high rise hotels, lush tropical rain forests or endless beaches. The beaches on Bonaire are small by any Caribbean standard (another blessing for the reef, by the way); the topography is similar to that found in the southwestern United States and northern Mexico (desert).

BONAIRE SNORKELLING SITES

A team of expert snorkellers and underwater photographers designed the Bonaire Guided Snorkelling Program in conjunction with the Bonaire Marine Park and local operators. The first phase of the project involved swimming the entire western coastline (and around the small island of Klein Bonaire) to determine which areas offered the very best snorkelling. The map shows you the 12 areas that were selected, based on the different types of coral terraces and attractions. It should be noted that the entire coastline of Bonaire contains many other snorkel/dive sites; these 12 were selected to represent distinct experiences. Sites immediately adjacent to those on the map will provide excellent snorkelling experiences as well. The changes among different parts of the coral reef occur gradually as the coastline and other conditions change. Enjoy them all!



ADVANCED SNORKELLING TIPS

Basic snorkelling skills (reviewed in the island-wide Introduction to Bonaire Guided Snorkelling) are designed to make sure you are comfortable with your equipment and can float around the reef, completely relaxed and enjoying the underwater world. There are easy skills to master, particularly with the help of a guide. As you get more and more accustomed to snorkelling, you will feel an urge to dive down and take a closer look at the marine life. This is called freediving and consists of holding your breath, making a surface dive and slowly exploring the reef. While it's not difficult, most people (particularly beginners) are not immediately comfortable doing it and most of the reasons for this are easy to solve!

The first area to consider is your natural buoyancy. Some people are floaters; other are sinkers. This has to do with the relative size of your lungs (in proportion to total body size), percentage of muscle/fat (muscle weighs more than fat) and basic physique. In general, there are far more floaters than sinkers. If you are a floater and try to freedive, you will have to constantly kick to keep yourself underwater. This will quickly deplete your air and energy.

Like everything else in the underwater world, relaxation is the key to freediving. You kick only to move from place to place. How do you offset the natural tendency to float? Your guides will show you how to add a couple of pounds (not much is necessary) of lead weight to a weightbelt, which will offset this natural buoyancy. They'll also help you with your surface dive, which, when you get good, can get you 10 or 15 feet underwater with just one kick. Once you are down, you should be able to hover without kicking, a sure sign you are correctly weighted. See your Bonaire Guide for more help in this very exciting area of advanced snorkelling.

In keeping with the conservation philosophy of the island of Bonaire, it is recommended that snorkellers never come in contact with the reef. If you dive down and attempt to stay down by holding on to the coral, several things may happen. First of all, you might cut yourself because coral is very, very sharp. Two, the coral might accidentally snap off, destroying several hundred years of growth. Either option is not positive; the guides will be happy to work with you and make you an effortless freediver.

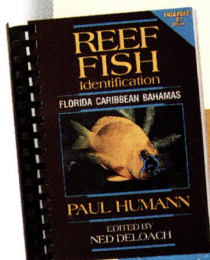
As you get better and better, you will also learn something called the finger touch technique. There are parts of the underwater world safe to touch but you need to know exactly which parts. These are noncoral areas and you can closely observe corals and marine life by steadying yourself with just the touch of a finger on these parts of the reef. Again, your guides will help you! Snorkel safely (always with a buddy) and responsibly!



Camouflage is a trick of the shy Trumpetfish but, within a short time, snorkellers will easily spot these strange inhabitants.

things run on time, there is enough "island" time that no one takes anything too seriously. On the whole, service on the island is good and the more than 40 restaurants that dot downtown Kralendijk are surprising in their sophistication and offerings.

Resorts run the gamut from small hotels to condominiums. This is a different kind of island and its strategy for tourism is dependent on slow, not rapid growth. Nearly all of the resorts have a restaurant on the premises and there are several grocery stores close by to help stock a condominium kitchen as well. Nightlife is usually dinner and a stroll through town or maybe stopping for an after dinner drink or dessert. This is not a raging nightlife center and, anyway, after going snorkelling a couple of times during the day, you will appreciate getting to bed early. The resorts usually have some form of entertainment, ranging from slide shows for visiting divers and snorkellers to happy hours, special dinner events and sunset cruises. But the point is clear. Bonaire is quiet and relaxed; a welcome



FISHWATCHING



One of the most fascinating and popular activities among snorkellers is fishwatching. With more than 150 species of fish to see in Bonaire waters, you may need a little help (even after you attend your Fishwatching Briefings) to correctly identify all of the colorful characters you'll meet! The "Bible" of fishwatching is *Reef Fish Identification*, written and photographed by Paul Humann and edited by Ned DeLoach. It is part of a series of Reef Identification books called the Reef Set, which also includes *Reef Coral Identification* and *Reef Creature Identification* (for invertebrates). Humann and DeLoach also publish a *Snorkelling Guide to Marine Life*. Look for these books in your local bookstore or contact:

New World Publications

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(800) 737-6558 (904) 737-6558

relief to the frantic vacation pace of some other Caribbean destinations.

OTHER ACTIVITIES

Besides Bonaire's Guided Snorkelling Program, all resorts carry a full watersport program, which can include scuba training and reef trips, a tourism mainstay on the island. Many of the larger resorts feature children's programs (crafts and activities) in addition to snorkelling. But the ocean and its reefs are the main reason to visit Bonaire, with island style a close second! Kayaking, mountain biking (tours for all levels of experience) and birdwatching are also gaining in popularity. Bonaire is a celebration of nature, so it's perfectly natural for its activities to follow along the same route. The entire northern end of the island is a national park. A one-half day excursion to this pristine area will show you that Bonaire has enacted conservation policies designed to preserve its natural resources while sharing them with residents and visitors alike.



Preservation of Bonaire's reefs is the aim of the Marine Park's zero impact policy, inviting all snorkellers to take responsibility.

CONCLUSION

The Bonaire Guided Snorkelling Program, the first such island wide program in the world, provides visitors with a unique opportunity to visit, learn about and enjoy their pristine coral reefs. You'll find the program and the guides friendly and well informed and you can arrange your snorkelling schedule according to your vacation needs. Snorkellers of any

age can participate in the program and the guides will help you learn to snorkel or improve your snorkelling skills as you enjoy your week's stay. You'll meet an impressive array of fish and learn about their daily habits, brilliant colors and sometimes odd behavior.

The coral reefs of the world offer one of the most unusual natural habitats on the planet and Bonaire is lucky enough

BONAIRE'S MARINE PARK

Bonaire is generally recognized as the world leader in coral reef conservation. This is owing to a concerted and mutual effort by local operators and the Bonaire Marine Park to ensure that visitors will have minimal impact on the environment through a combination of education and safety related projects.

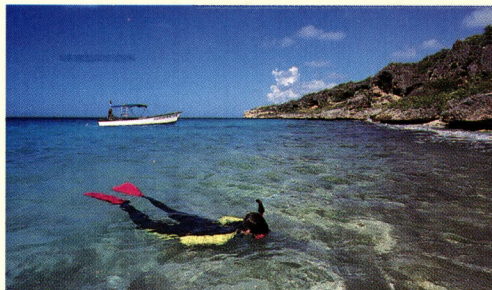
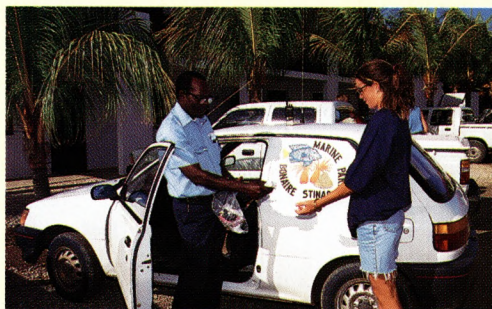
The Bonaire Marine Park constantly monitors the reefs for fish populations and coral health. They rotate the dive and snorkel sites to make sure any accidental damage caused by visitors or natural processes does not threaten a reef's long term health. In addition, they are responsible for an island-wide system of mooring buoys that make it unnecessary for boats to anchor on the reefs. Your snorkel boats will use these moorings, helping to minimize potential damage.

The Bonaire Marine Park is funded through private donations and some government funds but the majority of funding is provided by visiting divers and snorkellers who pay a modest \$10 fee to use the waters of the Bonaire Marine Park. The fee is used to upgrade moorings, continue water quality and fish surveys and provide ongoing educational efforts for user groups. The park (and the rangers) all embrace the concept of Responsible Snorkelling, where snorkellers take responsibility for their own actions and seek to achieve zero impact or damage to the coral reefs. Upon paying the fee, visitors are issued a medallion, good for an entire year, which they can attach to their snorkel or mask. The medallions are available directly from the rangers or any of the resorts.

It is against the law to remove coral or marine life from the waters of Bonaire and all of the water surrounding Bonaire and Klein Bonaire is part of the Marine Park. In addition to these laws, the Bonaire Marine Park encourages snorkellers:

1. Not to have any contact (accidental or otherwise) with the coral reefs. While not touching anything with your hands is relatively easy, also make sure your fins and legs don't accidentally come in contact with corals!
2. Ask your guide for help if you feel uncomfortable in any way and please follow any constructive advice the guides may offer in terms of snorkelling tips and techniques.
3. It is recommended that snorkelling in the Lac Bay mangroves only be done in the company of a trained guide.
4. Proceed at a slow pace, move gently and in a relaxed manner while snorkelling. Not only will you minimize accidental damage, you will also be able to get closer to marine life.

These and other recommendations regarding Responsible Snorkelling are integral parts of both the Marine Park's philosophy and Bonaire Guided Snorkelling.



BONAIRE FACTS

LOCATION: Easternmost Caribbean island in the southern Dutch (ABC) islands of Aruba, Bonaire and Curacao. Forty miles north of the coast of Venezuela.

SIZE: It is 24 miles long and 3 to 7 miles across; 112 square miles in area. There is also a small, undeveloped island, Klein Bonaire, directly off the main town of Kralendijk.

AIR TRAVEL: Approximately two hours and 45 minutes from Miami International Airport. Scheduled international carriers are ALM, Air Aruba and KLM.

PASSPORT AND VISA REQUIREMENTS: For U.S. and Canadian citizens, proof of citizenship (birth certificate or passport) and valid return air ticket.

LANGUAGE: Dutch and Papiamentu are the official languages; English and Spanish are spoken nearly universally.

TRANSPORTATION: Taxis, rental cars and vans are widely available.

CURRENCY: Antillean Guilder, U.S. dollars and major credit cards are accepted nearly everywhere.

CLIMATE: Average temperature is 82°F; annual rainfall, 22 inches. There is a prevailing easterly cooling wind.

DRESS: Appropriate to climate, always casual and informal, including restaurants and nightlife. Shorts and light shirts are appropriate at all times.

TIPPING: For services rendered, 10 to 15 percent, as is customary in the United States.

ELECTRICITY: 127/120 volts. Most U.S. appliances work without adapters. Resorts supply adapters for specialized equipment such as cameras, rechargeable lights and the like.

Time: One hour ahead of Eastern Standard Time; same time as Eastern Daylight Time.

For more information on Bonaire, contact the Tourism Corporation Bonaire:

U.S. (800) U-BONAIR
Fax—(212) 956-5911
1 Rockefeller Plaza
New York, NY 10022

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The Perils of Topside Video

TEXT AND PHOTOGRAPHY BY JIM CHURCH

"Honey, aren't you going to shoot any video topside?" You're at a fantastic dive destination and have been shooting underwater video for the past two days. "Yea," you reply, "topside will be easy."

TOPSIDE AIN'T ALWAYS EASY

Underwater videography may be your main goal but topside shots will add interest and variety to your videos. However—and this may be a surprise—topside shots are often harder than underwater shots. Why? Because the hazards of tropical climates, the spray aboard small dive boats and the brilliance of bright sunlight are all obstacles you must overcome.



leave your cool, air-conditioned room. No sooner does your camcorder greet the humid outside air than it ceases to

function. The lens fogs over and the outer surfaces of the camcorder become moist and slippery. You look in the electronic viewfinder and see a strange warning sym-

bol. Panic time—what is happening?

Moving the camcorder from cool, dry air inside your room to warm, humid outside air causes condensation. You clean the lens, wipe off the camcorder, aim the camcorder at your subject and trigger the shutter. Nothing happens! The built-in dew circuit

(Continued on Page 180)

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The Baths, Virgin Gorda, are enormous and mysterious boulder formations that offer a spectacular backdrop for snorkeling and picnicking.

The British Virgin Islands

Divers' Playground in Paradise

TEXT AND PHOTOGRAPHY BY BILL HARRIGAN

As a dive destination, the British Virgin Islands are close to perfection. They are a world apart; a tropical archipelago surrounded by clear, blue water. Below the surface abundant reefs, historic wrecks and prolific fish life provide a huge variety of protected dive sites. Ashore there is a delightful ambience, distinctly different from other Caribbean vacation spots. The entire island chain is a playground and the main attractions are natural, not man-made. The excellent restaurants and romantic resorts complement, rather than overpower, all of nature's little secrets.

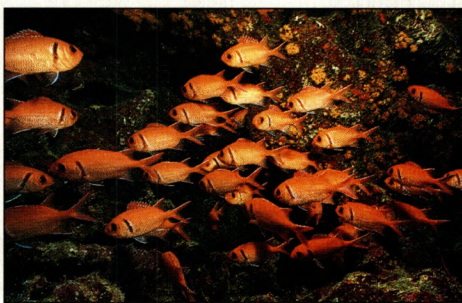
The BVI are also a paradise for modern sailors. Graceful yachts from several charter fleets are in constant motion, crisscrossing Drake's Passage during



Peter Island is a perfect getaway for people seeking privacy and pure, natural beauty.

the day and resting snugly in myriad coves at night. Boats are actually a principal mode of transportation in the BVI. Ferries connect the islands on a regular schedule, along with charter boats, water taxis and dive boats.

Tortola is the largest island and, with just more than 13,000 residents, has the largest population. The government seat is in Road Town, which has a range of fine restaurants and resorts catering to a variety of tastes. The Prospect Reef Resort, for instance, has seven different types of accommodations, from villas and townhomes to single rooms. Although there are gift shops with high quality goods on several of the islands, most of the shopping opportunities are in Road Town. There are some good buys



Above: Kathleen Harrigan inspects the coral and sponge encrusted remains of the world famous wreck, the *Rhone*. **Left:** Blackbar Soldierfish (*Myripristis jacobus*) flit about Blond Rock, the pinnacle the *Rhone's* captain avoided on that ill fated night in 1867, only to strike nearby Black Rock.



Soper's Hole, Tortola—once the favorite haunt of pirates, thieves and brigands—now shelters quite a different kind of traveler.

in artwork, crafts, jewelry and, of course, there are the ever popular T-shirts.

An old pirate's lair at Soper's Hole, on the western end of Tortola, has taken on a decidedly different veneer, becoming a favorite watering hole for both sailors and divers. Restaurants, a dive shop, accommodations and entertainment

can be found along the narrow arm of water where pirates once anchored.

Tortola is about ten miles long and two miles wide, made up almost entirely of hills. It will seem fast paced compared to Virgin Gorda, where the beaches and low-key lifestyle invite relaxation. The Baths, with enormous

granite boulders scattered on the beaches like marbles spilled from a giant's bag, is a favorite for picnicking and snorkeling.

North Sound on Virgin Gorda is a playground in paradise for boaters. It is also rimmed with restaurants and resorts that are perfect for vacationing divers. The bustle of civilization can be left behind at natural retreats such as the Drake's Anchorage Resort Inn or more lively settings can be found such as the Leverick Bay Resort.

There are two choices for Peter Island—stay at the exclusive Peter Island Resort and Yacht Harbour or make a day trip via the ferry from Road Town. The entire island is dedicated to this single resort, with three exquisite beaches, a pool, two restaurants, tennis courts and miles of hiking or biking trails. Peter Island is perfect for people seeking privacy and a chance to immerse themselves in the natural beauty of the island.

The British Virgin Islands

Jost van Dyke is barefoot casual, a place for freshly grilled chicken or fish at a beachside picnic table, listening to the gentle whisper of waves on the beach. Cooper Island and Marina Cay are also wonderful places to get away from telephones and other modern instruments of stress. Both feature dive shops,

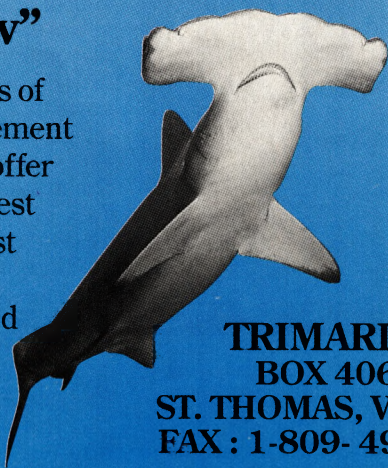
restaurants and small resorts.

Anegada is different from the rest of the BVI, a flat coral atoll surrounded by shallow coral reefs. Its location, about 16 miles north of Virgin Gorda, and the difficulty in navigating around the numerous reefs limits access to Anegada. However, day packages are available for snorkeling, beach excursions and meals. The Anegada Reef Hotel provides overnight accommodations with just the right combination of informality and comfort. Air taxi and ferry service is available to Anegada from Tortola and Virgin Gorda.

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THE DIVING

Except for rare major storms, diving is always good in the British Virgin Islands. The sites are protected from the wind by the islands, so big waves are not a problem. Protection from human damage is provided by the National Parks Trust and the voluntary responsibility of the dive operators. Visibility is consistently in the 60 to 100 foot range, with 120 feet a fairly common occurrence. Strong currents are rare. Most of the dive sites are relatively shallow, usually ranging from 10 to 70 feet, with most of the action between 15 and 50 feet.

Divers on charter boats can take advantage of a unique BVI service—rendezvous diving. Arrangements can be made by radio for a rendezvous with a dive boat, which picks divers up and takes them to the site, returning them to their boat afterward.

The British Virgin Islands

BVI

BLUE WATER DIVERS

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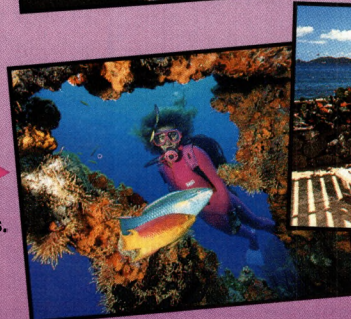
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The British Virgin Islands

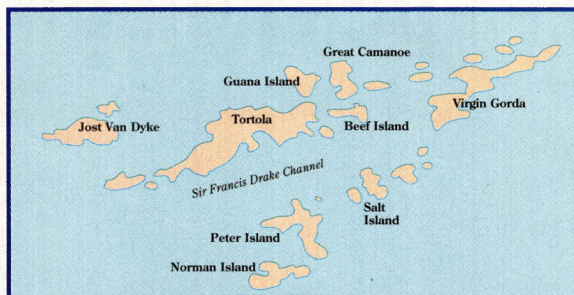
Dive operators have facilities on Tortola and Virgin Gorda, as well as Marina Cay, Cooper and Peter Island. Several operators have branches on more than one island.

The following are popular dive sites:

Launched in 1865, the **Royal Mail Steamer Rhone** was one of the first successful propeller driven ships. Only two years later, she was tragically sunk near Salt Island during a hurricane. The bow section now lies remarkably intact on the sand in 75 feet of water. Nearby, in shallower water, the stern is scattered over a larger area. The *Rhone* is considered one of the top wreck dives in the world.

The triple canyons of **Painted Walls** are covered with a profusion of red, yellow, brown and green corals and sponges. This is a relatively shallow dive, with the most interesting sections between 10 and 40 feet.

Four rock pinnacles project above the surface at the **Indians**, giving it a distinct profile both above water and below. The pinnacle walls are covered with hard and soft corals, including some willowy and



very elaborate gorgonians.

From the deep end of the coral ridges in 70 feet to the shallow forereef in 10 feet, **Alice's Wonderland** is an outstanding example of the reef building capability of hard corals. Massive colonies of Star Coral and Giant Star Coral have built these ridges over hundreds of years. Smooth Brain Coral and Convoluted Brain Coral compete for space with the Star Corals; soft corals such as sea fans and Porous Sea Rods wave gently from the ridges like flags on a castle wall.

There are actually two wrecks at the site of the **Marie L.**, in addition to an extensive reef. The tugboat *Marie L.* and an inter-island freighter rest on the sand at about 75 feet, surrounded by Garden Eels and Southern Stingrays. **Blue Chromis Reef** is immediately adjacent, where a coral covered wall rises to 50

feet before leveling out in a series of coral ridges and sand channels.

Lush soft corals visually dominate the scene at **Vanishing Rock**. This small pinnacle can offer some really large Barrel Sponges and impressive Pillar Corals.

Joe's Cave and the **Chimney**, near Great

Dog Island, both feature underwater arches that attract masses of small fish such as Copper Sweepers and Silversides. These, in turn, attract predators such as Tarpon and Crevalle Jacks.

The coral is the thing at **Coral Garden**. There are huge Star Coral heads, globes of Grooved Brain Coral and patches of pinkish gray Finger Coral. There are also Elkhorn and Staghorn Corals and a guidebook would be needed to identify all the soft corals. **Rhone Reef**, **Diamond Reef** and **Sandy Reef** are also known for resplendent corals and a profusion of fishes.

The wreck of the **Chikuzen** is one of the few weather dependent sites in the British Virgin Islands but this can be an excellent dive. This 250 foot refrigerator ship is eight miles north of Great Camanoe Island, an exposed position that attracts an assortment of both pelagic and reef fish. Most of the ship is intact and three cargo holds can be entered through open hatches.

TRAVEL INFORMATION

A passport is recommended for travel to the BVI but U.S. citizens need only a certified birth certificate and photo ID. The official currency is the U.S. dollar and the 110 volt electrical current is also conveniently familiar.

The most popular route to the British Virgin Islands is through San Juan, Puerto Rico, with one of the major carriers, then on to Beef Island by commuter plane. For instance, American Airlines offers non-stop service from many cities on the east coast to San Juan, while American Eagle provides the final connection. Another route to the BVI is through St. Thomas, in the U.S. Virgin Islands. A short ferry ride connects from there to Tortola or Virgin Gorda.

The average air temperature in the winter is about 75°F. In the summer, it's about 85°F. The standard of dress alternates between a bathing suit and a T-shirt and shorts. In the more formal establishments something a bit more dressy may be appropriate.

For an information packet with specifics on activities, dining and accommodations, contact the BVI Tourist Board at (800) 835-8530 or fax (212) 949-8254.



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Tortola, British Virgin Islands

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of distinctive diving and
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BONAIRE FISHWATCHING COURSE

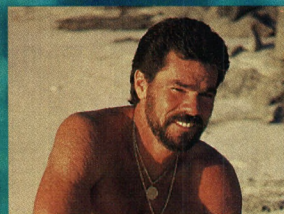
Sand Dollar Dive and Photo in Bonaire is proud to announce the addition of a new program to its already extensive offering of services. For every recreational diver who wants to discover the rewarding activity of fishwatching, Sand Dollar has expanded its weekly guided fishwatching trips into Introduction to Fishwatching, a course taught by experienced naturalist Jerry Ligon. In addition to identifying the 50 most commonly seen reef fish, divers will learn how to use reference tools in identifying a mystery fish, understand the diver's role in protecting the reef ecosystem, how to keep an accurate list of fish seen during a dive career and, most importantly, increase the enjoyment of each dive.

The course involves four to five hours of classroom time with slide presentation and three water sessions. For more information, contact Sand Dollar Reservations at (800) 288-4773 or on the island (011) 599-7-5252; fax (011) 599-7-8760. 🐠

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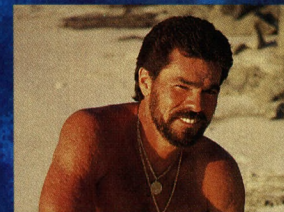
Free offer does not include meals or beverages. Offer valid thru

December 10, 1996. One person, per room, must be certified diver.

This offer is not available to groups. Offer is subject to availability and may change without notice. Other restrictions may apply.

Local phone : (919) 419-3484.

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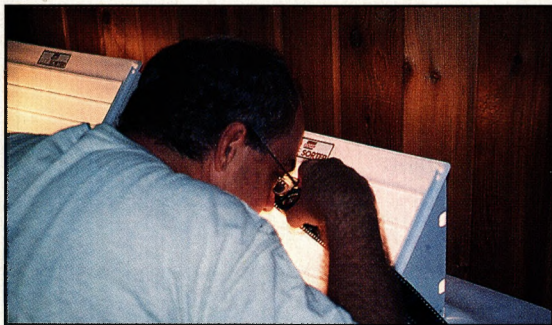


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SKIN DIVER JUNE 1996 89



Above: Nikonos Shootout participants attend fun, informative lectures each night to get tips on how to win. Below: A contestant chooses his best shot for entry.



Key Largo dive operators (below and right) will have special boat schedules to accommodate all the participants.

The Key Largo Nikonos

Improve Your U/W Photography Skills and Win Prizes at the Same Time!

**TEXT AND PHOTOGRAPHY
BY BILL GLEASON**

The hottest diving weekend in South Florida this year will take place September 12 through 15 as Key Largo hosts its second annual Nikonos Shootout. The Nikonos Shootout, the largest underwater photography event in the world, has been a mainstay of Caribbean islands for the past 11 years. Last year, sponsors of the event decided to test south Florida waters during a three day weekend event (the island contests are an entire week long) and see just what kind of reaction they'd get.

Rave reviews followed, as more than 250 participants (accompanied by nearly the same number of family and friends) joined Key Largo dive operators, hotels, Nikon, SKIN DIVER and others for three days of casual lectures, contests, parties, an underwater cleanup and just plain fun! While some of the visitors were veterans of Caribbean Shootouts, the overwhelming majority of folks were first time participants and enjoyed the show immensely. And, what a show it is!

First of all, The Key Largo Nikonos Shootout is a lot more than a photo contest with prizes worth tens of thousands of dollars (free trips, Nikon photo gear, Henderson divewear, Quicksilver inflatable with 15hp Mercury outboard, Sea Quest dive gear and a chance to win the ultimate live-aboard vacation for two on a Peter Hughes boat). It's also an educational event with friendly competition and fun. And the weekend, starting with the Thursday night welcoming party, is just about equal parts of all three. Here's

how it works.

First of all, a Shootout is open to all levels of U/W photographers, from rank novice through experienced (photo pros are not allowed). Many folks think only super shooters enter the contest but 11 years and more than 35 different contests tell us exactly the opposite. We've had category winners as young as 12 and other winners who had gotten a brand new Nikonos just before the contest! As far as the contest goes, skill will only take you about 50 percent of the way; luck will play just as important a role! So, don't stay home that weekend because you think you're not experienced enough to try! There will be plenty of prize winners come Sunday with just as little experience.

On Thursday night, we'll welcome everyone to Key Largo with an hour long show that explains how the Shootout works and includes tips from professional U/W photographers (Stephen Frink and Frank Fennell) on how to win the contest. After the lecture, there's a party, the first of three you can attend that weekend. You will find your fellow competitors friendly and eager to swap tips and stories on diving, travel and photography. Prior contestants know that luck plays as much of a role as skill, so why not kick back and have a good time while you're waiting for that unusual shot to come your way?

The next morning, you go to Film Pickup, either at your dive operator or at Stephen Frink's Photo Center. You'll be

given a free roll of film (36 exposures) courtesy of Kodak, one of the sponsors of the event. You make your own dive plans and have all day to expose the film. Friday's category is Open, which means you may use any part of the Nikonos system (or a housed camera, for competition in a different category) and any type of accessory/strobe. All the details are covered in the briefings. After your dives, you return the film and the organizers process it for you. That evening you get to attend another fun lecture on Macro/Closeup Photography, followed by (you guessed it) another party! In addition to the briefings and lectures, you can also ask any of the photo pros (there are usually six or seven in attendance) for advice any time you choose. These informal op-

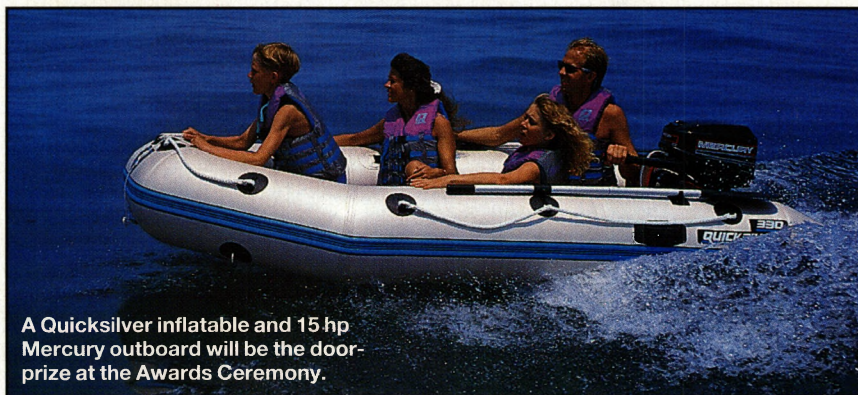


Shootout participants, friends and family can do their part to help the environment by attending an underwater cleanup; a fun, two hour event on Saturday.



Shootout

September 12 to 15, 1996



So, if you're one of those single photographer buddy teams or families, rest assured there are activities for the photographically challenged as well!

On Sunday morning, you get to relax and select your shot for Macro/Closeup. In the early afternoon you can attend the Awards Ceremony and find out just how many prizes you've won. More than 40 different prizes are handed out and the doorprize drawing (for a Quicksilver inflatable and 15 hp Mercury outboard) is always one of the hits of the Shootout. Last year, we asked the youngest contestant to select a name and the entire audience was delighted (the judges were shocked, as was she) when she picked her own name.

The Key Largo Nikonos Shootout is sponsored by Nikon, SKIN DIVER Magazine, Sea Quest, Mercury Marine, Henderson, Rolex, Peter Hughes Diving, Kodak and the hotels and operators of the Florida Keys. Reservations to participate in the Shootout should be made prior to your arrival by contacting Water-House Photo Tours at (800) 272-9122, (305) 451-2228 or fax (305) 451-5147.

Come join us in Key Largo. We'll have a full assortment of educational, competitive and fun activities to choose from and you can select any or all of them as you enjoy one of the most unique gatherings of divers anywhere! On the following pages you'll find a complete listing of participating operators, as well as packages, options for accommodations and more. ➤

portunities to ask questions are some of the most favorably commented on parts of the Nikonos Shootout.

On Saturday, you get another free roll of film and, again, all day to shoot it in the Macro/Closeup contest. When you return the film, you will be introduced to Film Selection, where lightboxes, loupes (magnifying glasses for viewing film) and your film from the day before await you. You get to go through all 36 of your shots and pick your best one to enter into the contest. Once again, the photo pros are all on hand to answer questions about your film, techniques or just about anything!

After Film Selection, you can also participate in an underwater cleanup, another fun event that helps the environ-

ment as well. It doesn't take long, about two hours, but we guarantee you'll have fun and discover trash in all kinds of places it shouldn't be. Everyone traveling with you can pitch in as well. While we're on that subject, there is also a much more casual contest (not that the Shootout is all that serious!) for snorkelers or divers who don't feel up to the "serious" events. The Fish Photo Scavenger Hunt is open to all, with some pretty good prizes. The object is to identify and photograph as many different species of marine life as possible. You can use any type of camera (even snorkeling cameras) to get the image. Just register with the Shootout (we'll give you a T-shirt and guidelines for the Shootout Lite contest) and off you go.

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Photos: Shirley Vanderbilt

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Topside, it's the quintessential palm tree studded South Pacific paradise; underwater, it's a divers' wonderland. It wasn't always so. Fifty-two years ago, Truk Lagoon was the site of a Japanese naval base. American airstrikes were organized in 1944 to decimate it. When the last bomb had been dropped, the final torpedo launched, 63 ships and 416 aircraft had been destroyed. Today, the warships lie in silence beneath warm blue waters, transformed into colorful living coral reefs supporting an incredible array of marine life.

While Truk appeals, of course, to



A 110 foot long luxury dive live-aboard, *Truk Aggressor II* carries 14 guests to the best wrecks and reefs in Truk Lagoon.

Truk Aggressor II

those interested in wrecks, that's not the only reason to dive there; the lagoon is an U/W photographer's dream come true, with wonderful wide angle and macro opportunities. It is also a fishwatchers' heaven.

If you hadn't already guessed, this is tropical diving. The air temperature averages about 87°F year-round; the water temperature, about 84.

Truk Lagoon is 2,500 miles southwest of Hawaii and 650 miles southeast of Guam. Also known as Chuuk, it is home to *Truk Aggressor II*, a 110 foot long live-aboard with a 22 foot beam. She carries 14 passengers to weekly adventures in Truk Lagoon, diving both wrecks and reefs. Of special note is that diving is done right from the *Aggressor*, not from dinghies.

One of the area's best known wrecks is the **Fujikawa Maru**. Four hundred thirty-seven feet long, this freighter sits upright in 120 feet of water. Her cargo included Zero airplane fuselages, wings, propeller blades, aircraft machine guns, bullets and saki bottles. The wreck is thickly covered with soft corals and sponges in a rainbow of hues. Schools of fish patrol her decks.

Truk's second largest wreck, a 500 foot long freighter, the **Shinkoku Maru**, sits upright on the bottom in 120 feet of water. Her marine life is considered among the best in the lagoon. She is noted for clownfish filled anemones as well as colorful soft corals, schools of jacks and, on occasion, sharks.

The huge, 461 feet long **Rio de Janeiro Maru** lies on her starboard side in 115 feet of water. Her enormous four bladed twin screws are covered with soft corals. She hosts lionfish and, occasionally, Gray Reef Sharks.

If weather permits, *Truk Aggressor II*

Diving the Wondrous Wrecks and Reefs of Truk Lagoon

BY BONNIE J. CARDONE
PHOTOGRAPHY BY WAYNE HASSON



guests may also spend a day at **North-east Pass**. This area is known for its abundant fish life and visibility in the 100 to 200 foot range. Sharks, schooling jacks and mantas have been sighted here.

THE SHIP

Truk Aggressor II guests are accommodated in seven air-conditioned state-rooms below decks. Each room is complete with vanity, private bath, upper single and lower double bunk.

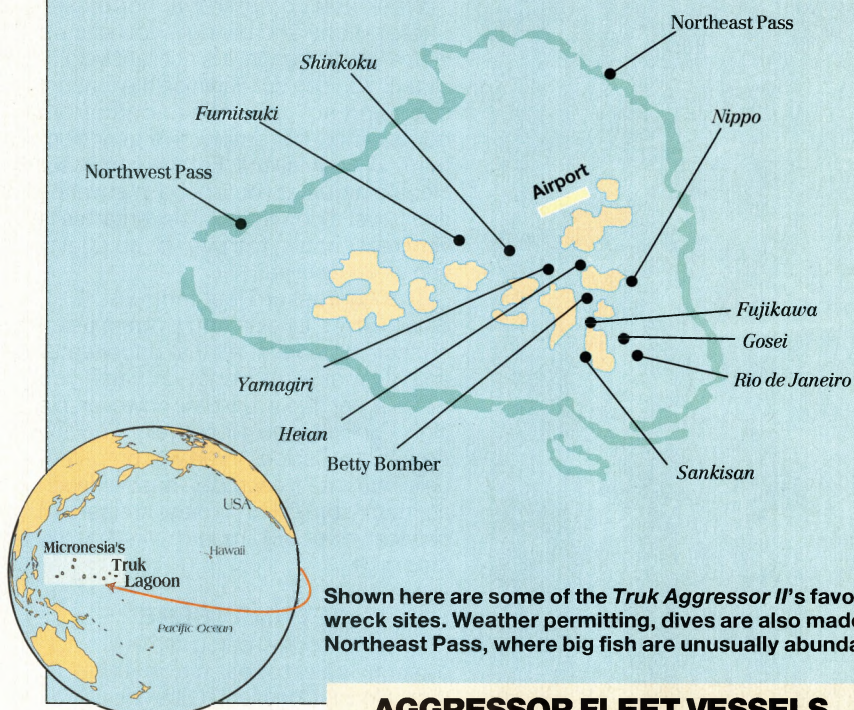
The *Aggressor's* main deck contains two comfortable air-conditioned multi-

In 1944, massive American airstrikes sank 63 ships and 416 aircraft in Truk Lagoon. These former weapons of war have been transformed into artificial reefs loaded with incredible marine life.

function rooms; the dining salon and the entertainment salon. In the well appointed entertainment salon, a large TV with VCR allows guests to watch their own underwater videos; light tables allow the viewing of guests' slides (the *Aggressor* photo pro offers daily E-6 film processing).

The main deck is also the dive deck. A

Truk Lagoon



Shown here are some of the *Truk Aggressor II*'s favorite wreck sites. Weather permitting, dives are also made at Northeast Pass, where big fish are unusually abundant.

twin laddered dive platform runs the width of the boat and contains a freshwater shower for quick après dive rinses. There's also a freshwater rinse tank for camera equipment and regulators. A carpeted two level table was designed with U/W photographers in mind and provides an ideal platform for servicing camera equipment. Along the sides of the deck there are racks for hanging dive suits. Tanks are secured behind the bench seats, mask, fins and other personal gear is stored in individual lockers beneath the seats. This deck also contains a head.

The upper deck is partially shaded. It has chaise lounges for relaxing in sun or shade, a hottub and the bar.

THE SERVICES

All *Aggressors* cater to photographers and, with 11 vessels and 12 years of experience, their photo services (indeed, all of their services!) are well tuned. There is always 110 volt electricity for charging strobes. Besides processing film, the photo pro can lend a helping hand with equipment, make minor repairs, rent you an entire Nikonos system or various

components and accessories and even teach you how to take underwater pictures (complete the course and you'll get a specialty certification).

Of special note are the Jim Church/Stan Waterman photo courses. There's one more this year; three next year. I can't imagine a more knowledgeable duo; between Jim and Stan anything and everything you could ever hope to know about photography, videography and cinematography is covered. (And, I guarantee you'll enjoy any class taught by these men!)

AGGRESSOR FLEET VESSELS

Vessel	Length	# Divers	Cruise Length	Price*
<i>Bay Islands Aggressor II</i> Honduras	110'	17	6 days	\$1,195
<i>Belize Aggressor II/III</i> Belize	110'	17	6 days	\$1,295/ \$1,495
<i>Cayman Aggressor III</i> Cayman Islands	110'	17	6 days	\$1,495
<i>Galapagos Aggressors I/II</i> Ecuador	80'	14	6 to 10 days (6 days)	\$2,195 (6 days)
<i>Kona Aggressor II</i> Hawaii	80'	10	6 days	\$1,695
<i>Okeanos Aggressor</i> Costa Rica	120'	20	10 days	\$2,695
<i>Palau Aggressor II</i> Palau	110'	16	6 days	\$1,995
<i>Truk Aggressor II</i> Truk Lagoon	110'	14	6 days	\$1,895
<i>Turks & Caicos Aggressor</i> Turks & Caicos	100'	16	6 days	\$1,295

*Special cruises, such as those with Jean-Michel Cousteau, Stan Waterman or Jim Church, cost more but there are also cruises offered at discount rates—ask when you book!

AGGRESSOR FLEET/ JEAN-MICHEL COUSTEAU L'AVENTURE 1996 SCHEDULE

Sail with Jean-Michel Cousteau

Bay Islands Aggressor II August 24 to 31

Jean-Michel Cousteau Team/ Nikonos Adventures

Cayman Aggressor III June 22 to 29
Belize Aggressor III July 13 to 20
Truk Aggressor II October 6 to 13
Palau Aggressor II October 13 to 20
Kona Aggressor II November 2 to 9

Project Ocean Search

Galapagos Aggressors I & II
 December 12 to 22

Jean-Michel Cousteau Film Expeditions

Okeanos Aggressor August 1 to 11

1997 STAN WATERMAN PHOTO COURSES

Bay Islands Aggressor III
 January 18 to 25

Kona Aggressor II
 May 31 to June 7

Okeanos Aggressor
 June 19 to 29

Cayman Aggressor III
 July 19 to 26

JIM CHURCH/ STAN WATERMAN PHOTO COURSES

Palau Aggressor II
 July 21 to 28, 1996
 April 20 to 27, 1997
 April 27 to May 4, 1997
 October 5 to 12, 1997

Truk Aggressor II
 July 14 to 21, 1996
 April 13 to 20, 1997
 May 4 to 11, 1997
 October 12 to 19, 1997

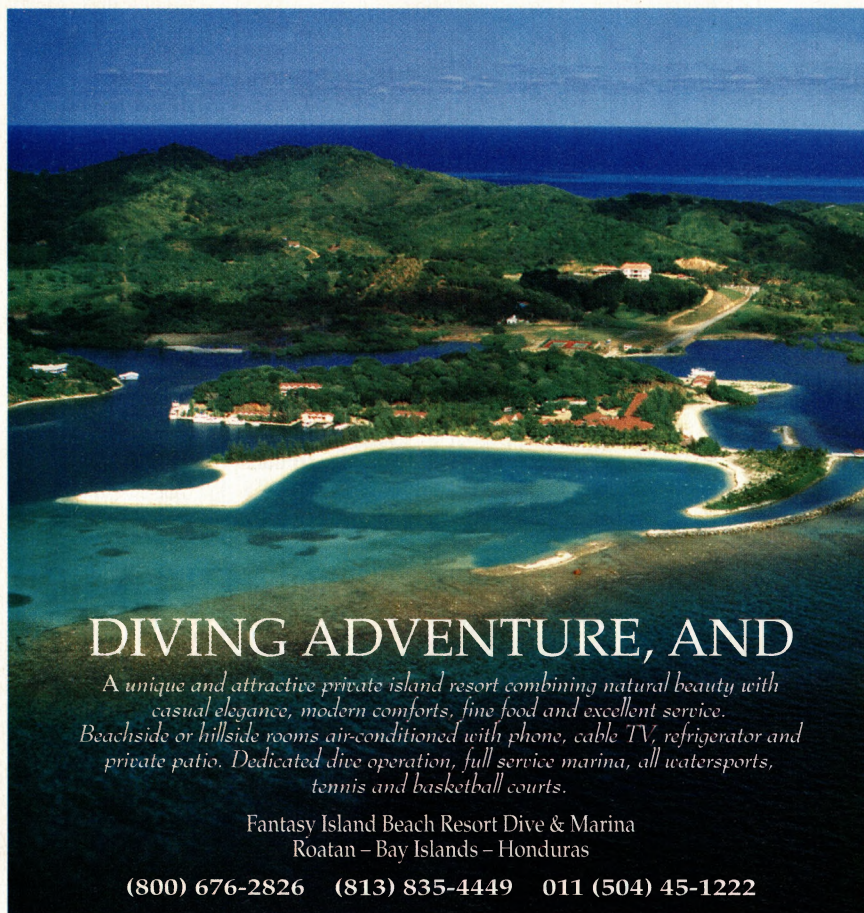
Okeanos Aggressor
 September 26 to October 6, 1996

JIM CHURCH PHOTO COURSE

Cayman Aggressor III
 August 10 to 17, 1996

The *Truk Aggressor II* also hosts a Jean-Michel Cousteau Team/Nikonos Adventure in October. Jean-Michel will not be aboard this week but his film crew will. Here is a unique chance, not only to see them in action but to participate in their film project.

Aggressor vessels are ideal places to combine a vacation with a specialty course. You improve your scuba skills while enjoying world-class diving. (Why not earn a wreck diving specialty during a *Truk Aggressor II* vacation? There's no better place in the world to wreck dive!)



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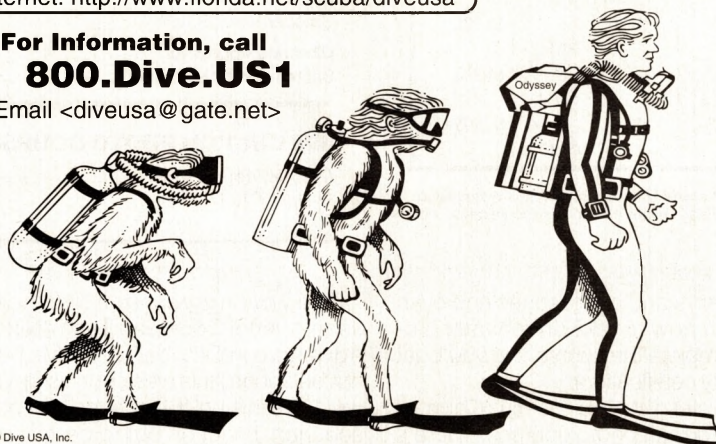
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GETTING THERE

For an unspoiled paradise, Truk is surprisingly easy to reach from the U.S. West Coast. Continental Micronesia flies from San Francisco or Los Angeles to Honolulu, then onto Guam. After a plane change, divers fly onto Truk, just an hour and a half farther. United States citizens need only proof of citizenship and a return plane ticket to enter Micronesia.

If you haven't been there, you've been missing out on some wonderful diving—isn't it time you visited Truk Lagoon? For more information about a *Truk Aggressor II* trip, contact the Aggressor Fleet, P.O. Drawer K, Morgan City, LA 70381; (800) 348-2628, (504) 385-2628 or fax (504) 384-0817.

SAVUSAVU CORRECTION

The names and phone numbers of resorts in the Savusavu, Fiji area were inad-

Cousteau Fiji Islands Resort
(800) 246-3454 (U.S.)
(011) 679-850-188 (Fiji)

Eco Divers
(800) 854-3454 (U.S.)
(011) 679-850-122 (Fiji)

Namale Resort
(800) 727-FIJI (U.S.)
(011) 679-850-435 (Fiji)

vertently omitted from the May 1996 article of the same name, written by Jack and Sue Drafahl. Those interested in visiting this area may contact the following for information and or reservations.

We regret the error and apologize for any inconvenience this omission may have caused.

BELIZE'S MANTA RESORT

(Continued from Page 45)

tions. To begin, there are noticeable differences in the environments of the three quadrants normally visited—pinacles and huge spurs separated by wide sand channels to the west, sizable walls and mid-reefs to the south, monstrous reefs and canyons on the east. The average visibility is between 100 and 200 feet; it is always 80 feet or better, even during periods of heavy winds.

Water temperatures vary from a winter low of 74°F to a summer high of 85°F. Currents are generally mild to nonexistent. A map on the restaurant wall previews 27 named dive sites. However, this area is simply too isolated and unused to have moorings. To avoid anchor damage, boat diving is done as a drift or live boating. Divers enter the water as a group and are picked up as they surface in buddy teams.

Examples of the wild and woolly underwater environment available to Manta Resort are experienced on nearly every dive. Extremely large Barracuda are frequently encountered on the outer



TACA has modern 767 and 737 aircraft and flies nonstop to Belize daily from the U.S. gateways of Miami, New Orleans and Houston, with immediate connections from Los Angeles and San Francisco.

wall and huge Nurse Sharks and big Southern Stingrays are often found on the mid-depth and shallow reefs. There is no routine; most every dive here is a genuinely unique experience. Dive sites are restricted to boats only because of the wave action over the crest of the fringing reef; often we were only one-quarter to one-half mile offshore. Geno, our divemaster, knew every site just by reading its bottom contours.

A typical Glover's Reef wall dive can be seen at **Grouper's Gulch**, a few minutes around the corner from Manta's dock. Here, the drop-off begins in only 25 feet of water. At the edge, huge boulder sized coral heads, covered with gorgonians, descend almost vertically to a shelf more than 100 feet below. As the name suggests, this is a fish haven frequented by scores of Nassau and Yellowfin Groupers. In the winter months, during spawning sea-

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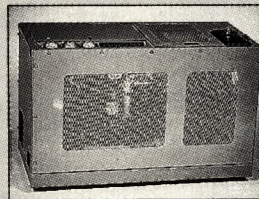
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In 1996, Red Sail Sports provides divers all this and more. Now dives depart daily from two locations on Seven Mile Beach and from our new center at **Rum Point** offering convenient access to the spectacular North Wall and Stingray City.

A variety of hotel and diving packages from budget to first-class accommodations are available starting at \$288 for a 4 day/3 night stay. It's easy to see why Red Sail Sports is the choice of discriminating divers. For reservations and information call 800-255-6425.

Hotel rate example is for the Seaview Hotel in Grand Cayman, per person based on double occupancy, 5/1-10/15/96.

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BELIZE'S MANTA RESORT

son, groupers can be found in the dozens.

Close by is a similar wall site known as **Gorgonia's Gallery**, lined with tall sea-whips and seafans. Not far away is **Masada** and **Nooks 'n Crannies**, pinnacle reefs usually harboring Nurse Sharks. **Barrel Head**, with giant Barrel Sponges, and **Wall Street**, with a dramatic vertical wall, are also close to the resort.

An example of a pristine shallow reef can be found at **Elkhorn Crossing**. Here is a beautiful coral garden dominated by huge lobular coral formations covered with giant stands of golden Elkhorn Coral. The depths vary from 40 to 50 feet at the sand bottom to 10 feet or less at the sunlit Elkhorn patches.

My favorite dive site is about a 15 to 20 minute boat ride to the east. At the southeast corner of the atoll, on the oceanside of Long Caye, is a one-quarter mile stretch of drop-off known as **Hole in the Wall**. This is actually a series of side by side pinnacles, each more magnificent than the one before. Entering at the east end and moving westward, you encounter a continuous series of pinnacles and canyons until it eventually levels out to a mid-reef and sandy shelf. The overall impression is one of diving along a submerged mountain range, revealed in crystal visibility. Giant corals meander to the drop-off and then fall in a cascade that looks like an underwater avalanche. Here we found huge Barracuda and schools of jacks and Spadefish. Eagle Rays and even sharks are occasionally sighted.

Our last dive was on an unnamed site at the southwest edge of the atoll. In the late afternoon sun we spotted giant black wings splashing on the surface. With a wide smile, Geno announced, "Mantas" and we jumped in for a unique adventure. For the next 20 minutes our group of snorkelers cavorted with six Giant Manta Rays. Three in particular stuck around for the entire session, rewarding divers with barrel rolls and allowing gentle touches. What could be more fitting than a Manta Ray encounter at Manta Resort?

The standard Manta Resort package is a Saturday to Saturday stay that includes pickup at Belize International Airport and transfer to and from the docks, the boat ride to and from the resort, meals, lodging and diving. TACA flies modern 737 and 767 Boeing jets to Belize daily from several U.S. gateways.

For information and reservations, contact Manta Resort at (800) 326-1724 or fax (011) 501-23-2764.

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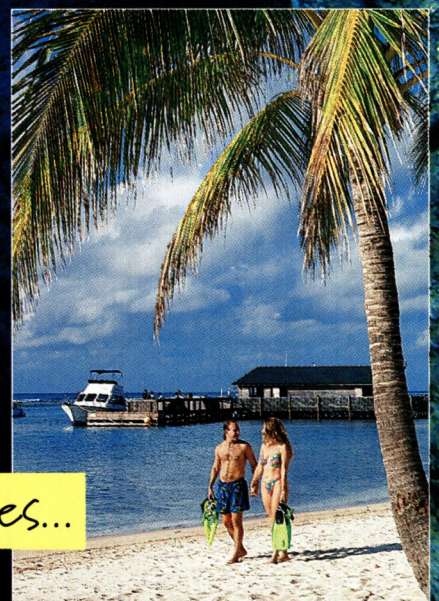
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and, of course, world famous diving and adventure. In fact, Cayman Brac is probably more than you imagined.

This tiny 12-mile island begins with low-

Everything's so beautiful & unspoiled!



lying land to the west and culminates in a 140-foot towering limestone bluff to the east. A walk along the southern coast reveals a dramatic and picturesque shoreline as you approach the base of the bluff. Gaze upward and note that the bluff is dotted with caves that



It feels like we're on our own private island...



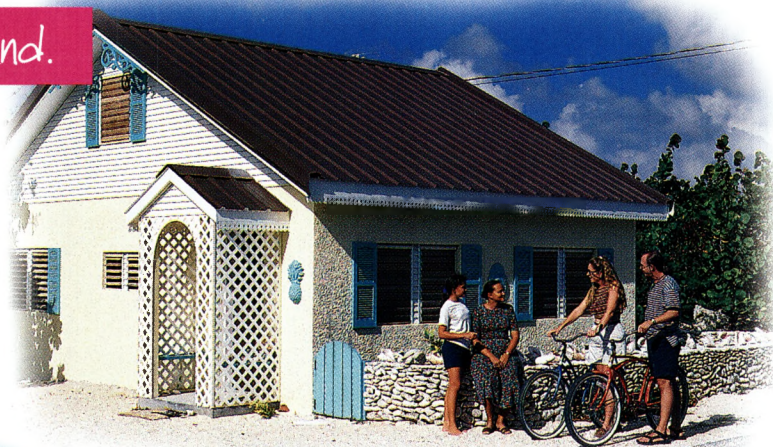
The Cayman Islands



Everyone feels like a friend.

were once used by pirates to hide their loot. Several caves offer the casual explorer easy access and interesting photo opportunities with age-old stalactites descending from the ceiling like pre-historic chandeliers.

Perhaps one of the most enjoyable activities available in Cayman Brac is a leisurely bike-ride around the island.



No crowds, except all the marine life...

This is a perfect way to get to know the local residents, called "Brackers." Pause to say "hello" and you'll likely find yourself listening to a fascinating tale of island history. Stop by the Cayman Brac



The diving is out of this world!

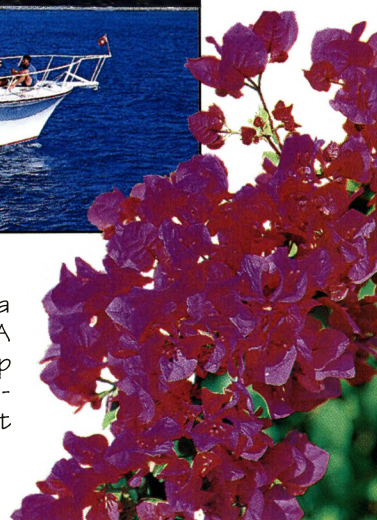


Museum to view artifacts that show you what life was like "in the old days."

With just more than 1,000 full-time residents, the only crowds you'll find in Cayman Brac are the schools of tarpon



underwater. The calm, clear Caribbean waters surrounding "The Brac" run a balmy 78°F—84°F year-round. A lightweight dive suit is plenty to keep you comfortable on famous (and fabulous!) dive sites like Anchor Wall, East

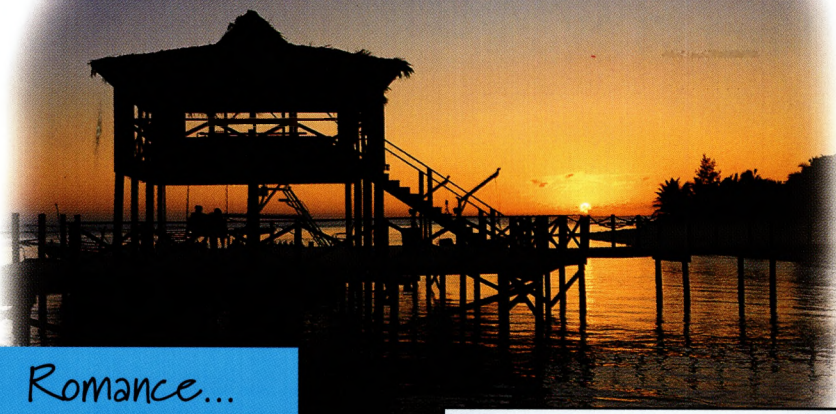
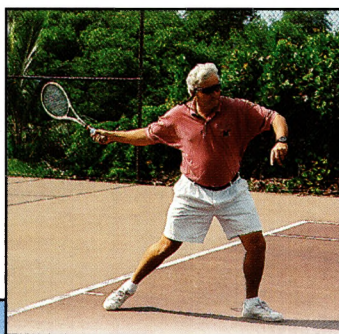


The resort staff made us feel like royalty.



Chute, the wreck of the Cayman Mariner, Rock Monster Chimney and Greenhouse Wall. You'll be astounded by the dramatic vertical walls and prolific array of beautiful sponges,

corals, rays, turtles, eels and more. The Brac boasts some 40 moored dive sites spanning the north and south coasts. With only 3 dive operations visiting these sites, you'll feel like you're on your own private island.



Romance...

The host of accommodations on Cayman Brac offers everything from efficiency apartments and condos to full service, all-inclusive beach-front resorts. Whether you dream of relaxing in your own private villa, or sipping a cool drink in a hammock under the palm trees, you'll be able to live that dream in Cayman Brac.

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PINNACLES AWARD

The first annual Pinnacles Award was presented on Saturday, October 14, 1995 at the InnerSpace '95 Aqua Party held in the Monterey Bay Aquarium. The award, for outstanding contributions to recreational diving in Northern California, was presented to Karl and Jill Wallin.

The Wallins ran a photography business until they learned to scuba dive on a vacation in Tahiti. Establishing a retail dive store in conjunction with their pho-



tography business, the couple maintained both businesses for ten years. The Wallins developed one of the first in-store travel agencies, became the San Francisco Bay area's first PADI instructor training center and promoted the then novel concept of women in diving. Their innovative contributions to promotion, education and safety were recognized with a seat on the PADI International advisory board.

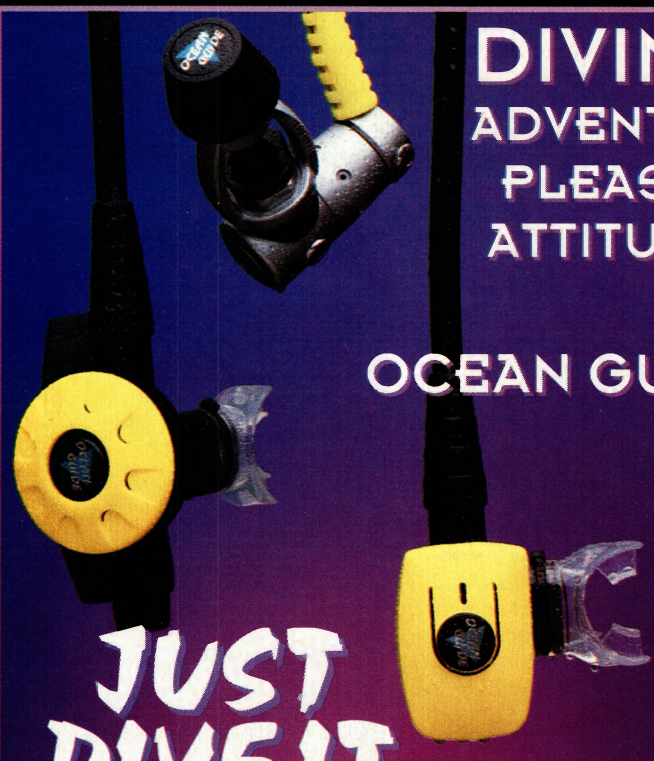
In 1986, they sold the photography business and concentrated on the dive industry. However, photography was still their forte. Their names can be found credited to many published images.

The Wallins' primary focus has always been the continued growth of the dive industry. They promoted the concept of a multi-faceted group from all aspects of the industry. They recognized that what would later become the Northern California Scuba Retailers Association (NC-SRA) was a way of working toward this goal and put all their support behind developing it. After its conception, Karl served as chairman for two years.

The Wallins have retired from the retail side of diving and their other commitments to devote more time to photography. However, their influence on all Northern California divers continues and their helpful advice remains only a phone call away.

The Pinnacles diving award will be presented each year at InnerSpace to a member of the Northern California dive community.

For further information, contact any NCSRA member facility, InnerSpace or Chip Lamber at 1188 Branham Lane, San Jose, CA 95118; (408) 265-3483, fax (408) 265-3498.



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* Per Rodale's Scuba Diving Magazine Readers Survey, Feb. '96 "Healthiest Reef in the U.S." ©SD/AD 1995

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There are two new buzz words energizing the dive industry today—nitrox and rebreathers, both of which play a big part of the new high tech dive programs at one of The Bahamas' most popular dive resorts, Stuart Cove's Dive South Ocean.

As explained in the cover story of the March 1996 SKIN DIVER, researched and photographed at Stuart Cove's Dive South Ocean, the Dräger corporation of Germany has manufactured the world's first recreational rebreather. Distributed by Uwatec, the Atlantis I is a semi-closed circuit rebreather, meaning the breathing gas is recycled and conserved, with the excess vented as necessary. Usually this means a trickle of exhaust every three or four breaths. The exhaust bubbles are far fewer than those from open circuit scuba, thus the system is far more quiet.

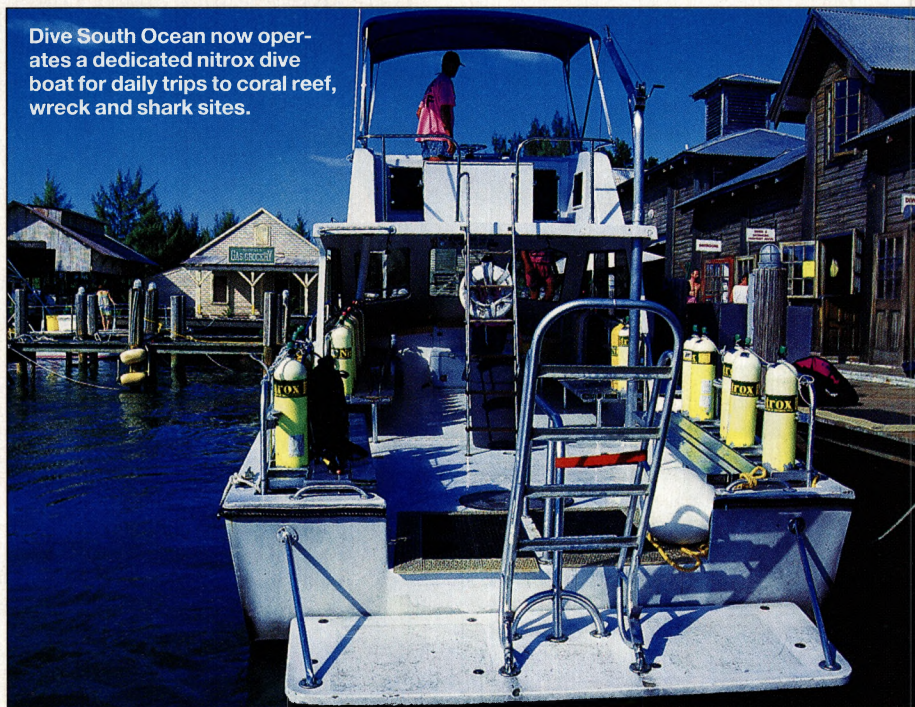
The stealth diving we underwater photographers would like to embrace is not the only goal of a rebreather. In addition, rebreathers are able to use variable gas mixtures to increase the amount of oxygen and decrease the amount of nitrogen (the gas that gets us into decompression trouble). This allows extended bottom times. This technology, however, requires special training. You can't even buy a rebreather without first undergoing

the appropriate training and certification specific to the unit purchased. Stuart Cove's Dive South Ocean provides not only entry level training for rebreather use but can also certify divers in rebreather technology using the Atlantis I.

INTRO TO REBREATHING DIVING: This is the rebreather resort course and can be

accomplished in a single day. A classroom session teaches a little of the history of rebreathers (it is interesting to note that Dräger AG has been manufacturing rebreathers for 90 years, although until now it has been for commercial and military markets rather than sport diving), the physiology of enriched air (nitrox) and the

Dive South Ocean now operates a dedicated nitrox dive boat for daily trips to coral reef, wreck and shark sites.



Stuart Cove's Dive South Ocean

A Bahamas Favorite Goes High Tech

BY STEPHEN FRINK

PHOTOGRAPHY BY GERI MURPHY

The Caribbean Reef Sharks encountered at Shark Runway are so tame they pose for pictures.



basics of the Atlantis I. Following the classroom introduction, students and their instructor move to the nearby beach-front swimming pool of the South Ocean Golf and Beach Resort to practice in-water skills. Actually, the use of the rebreather is pretty straightforward but there are other important skills to acquire before heading off into the ocean, such as how to switch over to the alternate compressed air source should anything go wrong with the rebreather or in case the gas supply in the rebreather is consumed. A pool session introduces these skills and prepares the student for the real fun of an open ocean rebreather dive.

Like a resort course, the Intro to Rebreather Diving course requires an instructor to be with the student during the dives. This is comforting, even for an experienced diver. A two tank dive to the fascinating shallow reefs and shipwrecks off southwest New Providence Island provides the opportunity to sample what rebreathers are all about. According to SKIN DIVER contributing editor, Geri Murphy, who received her rebreather certification at Stuart Cove's, "One thing is certain, rebreather diving feels entirely different than recreational scuba. It's like night and day. The first thing you notice is the utter silence around you. The familiar rumble of air bubbles is completely gone. There is almost a hush over the coral reef and you become aware of your breathing. You feel as if you are in a closet or a small space—with only the sound of your breathing to keep you company. The next conscious thought is that you're invisible. The fish don't seem to care that you are on their reef. Ordinarily timid fish swim right up to your face-mask. You start thinking, 'Wow, this is going to be great for underwater photography!' Even when the rebreather vents a small trickle of bubbles, it sounds entirely different (and less noisy) than scuba."

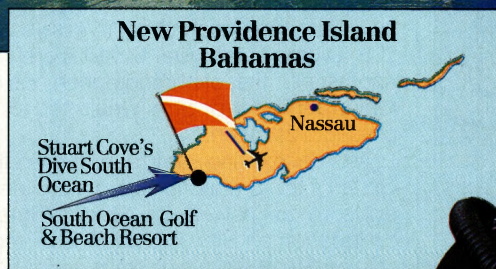
All in all, it's pretty heady stuff, a technology the serious recreational diver or dive professional cannot afford to ignore. The one day Intro to Rebreather Diving at Stuart Cove's Dive South Ocean is an effortless and fun way to get educated while enjoying some fabulous diving. The course prerequisite is being at least 18 years of age and an open water diver with more than 20 logged dives.

REBREATHING DIVING CERTIFICATION:

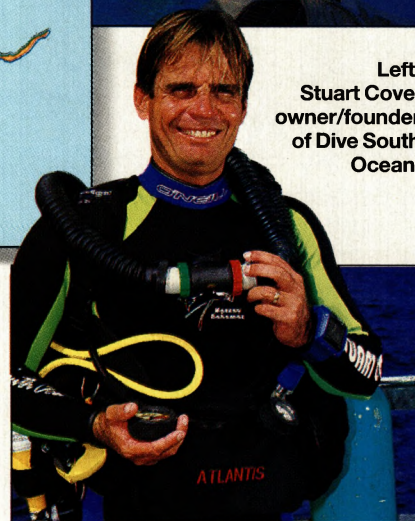
For the serious diver seeking to plunge into the exhilarating world of high tech, Stuart Cove's Rebreather Diving Certification is a full three day course specific to the Uwaterc/Dräger Atlantis I and leading to certification through the highly respected Technical Diving International (TDI) agency. In this case, the prerequisites are more comprehensive, including advanced open water certification, 20 logged dives, 18 years of age and, per-



Above: Dive South Ocean is one of the largest full service dive centers in The Bahamas with six dive boats, a nitrox and rebreather training center and an underwater photo center. **Below:** The South Ocean Golf and Beach Resort, adjacent to Dive South Ocean.



Left: Stuart Cove, owner/founder of Dive South Ocean.



haps the most significant qualifier, certification as an enriched air (nitrox) diver.

A big part of the rebreather's appeal is that it utilizes a gas other than compressed air to allow greater bottom times and/or safety when used in reasonably shallow depths. Nitrox, in its recreational dive applications, is designed to be used between the surface and 115 feet. Its greatest viability is probably in the 30 to 80 foot range, where most recreational diving occurs. There are several nitrox mixtures, commonly expressed as a percentage of oxygen. For example, nitrox 32 reflects a gas that is 32 percent oxygen. It has a specific set of no decompression tables and maximum operating depth (MOD) to safely avoid oxygen toxicity. Nitrox 36 likewise has different tables and a MOD, just as nitrox 40 or 50 would have. A certified enriched air diver would presumably bring this knowledge to the course. However, for those not already nitrox certified, Stuart Cove's Enriched Air Diver course can be scheduled at any

Below: Dive South Ocean recently expanded to include nitrox and rebreather training. A convenient dockside station has been installed to fill nitrox tanks.



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STUART COVE'S DIVE SOUTH OCEAN

time and takes a day and a half to complete. The three days of rebreather education are devoted to classroom sessions, pool training and four open water rebreather dives. The course fee includes TDI rebreather certification fees, boat dives and use of the Atlantis I. Successful certification permits students to buy the Atlantis I if they so desire or to rent one anywhere in the world.

FIN PHOTO CENTER

Given the underwater photo applications of rebreathers, it's only appropriate that Stuart Cove's Dive South Ocean should be a leader in the new technology. Stuart has long been involved in assisting professional underwater still photographers and Hollywood cinematographers in creating world-class photo opportunities with sharks, shipwrecks and stunning coral reefs. Stuart and Michelle Cove have helped me dozens of times over the years with commercial photo projects, both as dive operators and as talented underwater models. They have always provided the utmost in professionalism and cooperation. In this year's U.S. Divers catalogue, Stuart wore yet another hat, that of photographer; one of his underwater photos was used as a product illustration.

Another exciting sample of Dive South Ocean's film production talents is widely evident in the new movie, *Flipper*. Filmed on location on New Providence Island, utilizing Stuart Cove's grounds and buildings as its primary set, *Flipper* stars Elijah Wood, Paul Hogan and, of course, an Atlantic Bottlenose Dolphin whose stage name is Flipper.

When researching sites for this multi-million dollar extravaganza, Universal Studios needed a location that could deliver consistently clear water, beautiful coral reefs and topside infrastructure of quality boats and diving services. Stuart Cove's Dive South Ocean has long supplied these elements to Hollywood with the James Bond films *Never Say Never Again* and *Thunderball*, as well as other high profile productions such as *Splash*. So, it was no surprise that *Flipper* was filmed here. For the thousands of us who have dived with Stuart Cove's, the movie is particularly fascinating as we recognize specific sites in an underwater world we have come to know so well.

Fin Photo Center was not created for Hollywood moguls, however. Rather, it is dedicated to serving the underwater photographers who flock to New Providence to dive with its resident population of Caribbean Reef Sharks, extensive coral reefs, dramatic walls along the

Tongue of the Ocean and one of the Caribbean's widest assortment of shipwrecks. To that end, Fin Photo Center offers daily E-6 film processing (for Fujichrome, Ektachrome and Agfachrome films), camera rentals, custom still and video shoots, guest camera storage lockers, Cibachrome print processing from slides and photo instruction. There is also a small retail selection of the most needed photo accessories such as O-rings, batteries, film, books and, of course, T-shirts.

Despite its visibility in the world of high tech diving, Hollywood film production and services to underwater photographers, Stuart Cove's Dive South Ocean has never forgotten its primary responsibility to provide fun, high quality services to visiting divers. To accomplish this goal it has installed one of the most complete dive centers anywhere; including a fleet of five large fiberglass V-hulled custom dive boats; a massive compressor system comprised of a Davie 50 cfm, two Mako 25 cfm and a back-up 15 cfm compressor plus 90,000 cubic feet of air banks; and all the requisite guest gear storage rooms, classrooms, retail centers and maintenance facilities expected of a world-class dive operation. All of this is at a nearby waterfront facility designed for maximum diver convenience.

The highlight of the weekly dive portfolio is probably the special dives with groups of up to two dozen Caribbean Reef Sharks at **Shark Wall** and **Shark Runway**. Shark Wall is near the Tongue of the Ocean and features consistently excellent water clarity. As the divers kneel along a sand patch in 55 feet of water, one of Stuart Cove's shark wranglers will insert a polespear into a specially constructed baitbox. A shark sized tidbit will be skewered and held out to the frenzied predators. The sharks swirl in anticipation of a free handout and the divers get an up-close and personal view of one of the sea's most awesome creatures. At Shark Runway, a similar spectacle unfolds before the upright 90 foot shipwreck **Bahama Mama**.

However, New Providence diving is about more than sharks, there are also great wreck dives on the **Bahama Mama**, **Willaurie**, the **Tears of Allah** and the newest wreck, the 65 foot steel hulled fishing boat, **Sea Viking**. In 45 to 65 feet of water, these wrecks offer safe, easy dive profiles. Since all are near coral reefs, should one tire of exploring a shipwreck, the rich diversity of the reef is but a few finstrokes away. Wall divers will find vertical drop-offs decorated with Purple Tube Sponges and Black Corals beginning in only 40 feet of water along the **Tongue of the Ocean**. Those who simply love a shallow reef rich with tropical marine life and healthy corals will enjoy

SOUTH OCEAN GOLF AND BEACH RESORT

Stuart Cove's Dive South Ocean is at the South Ocean Golf and Beach Resort, a lovely resort complex far from the frenetic activity of Nassau, amid its own lavishly landscaped 190 acres and 1,500 feet of ocean frontage. The resort offers 250 rooms, split between those along the PGA rated 18 hole golf course and those bordering the beach. There are two swimming pools, three restaurants, several bars, tennis courts, an exercise room and even a special child care building. The property has been recently purchased by the Winfair Corporation, a Toronto based hotel chain that also operates La Belle Creole on St. Martin and the Treasure Island Resort on Grand Cayman. According to Travel World News in a quote by general manager Paul Royall, "Winfair is investing \$2 million to renovate rooms, redo the lobby and improve the infrastructure.... We've already set up a children's program and renovated facilities for it, and we will reopen the nightclub, which has been closed for four years, [featuring] local entertainment. The property already has a casino license and, within three years, we plan to build a small casino. I believe we have the potential of being a world-class resort."

For scuba divers, this is especially good news. Given the excellence of the underwater attractions off the southwest end of New Providence Island, the professionalism and dive infrastructure of Stuart Cove's Dive South Ocean and the new special programs for high tech diving and underwater photographers, the improvements being made by Winfair only serve to make a good thing better. For further information about the dive programs at Stuart Cove's Dive South Ocean or to book reservations, please phone (800) 879-9832 or, on New Providence, (809) 362-4171; phone/fax (809) 362-5227. 🐠



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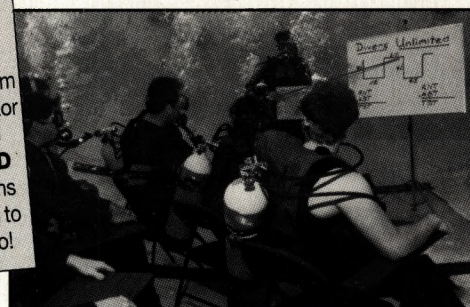
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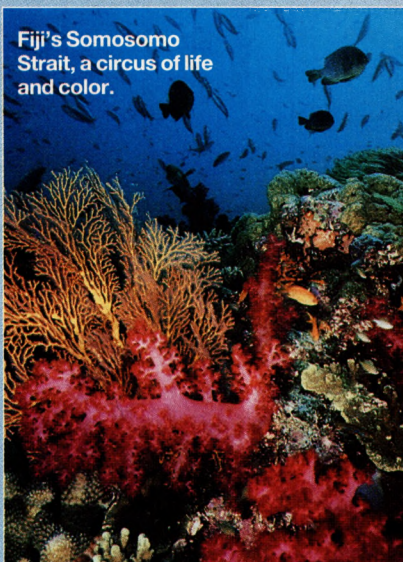
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Ever wonder where each new day actually begins? When you visit the island of Taveuni, Fiji you will quickly find the answer. The International Dateline runs right through the middle of the island. For convenience sake, the dateline has been moved so that all the Fiji Islands are under one time zone.

Taveuni is the third largest island in the 300 plus island group of Fiji. It lies 90 miles northeast of the main island of Viti Levu. After you arrive on Taveuni, friendly taxi cab drivers can take you to the two most popular resorts along the coast. Both Dive Taveuni and Garden Island Resort are on the edge of the Somosomo Strait, where you can find some of the most beautiful diving in the world. The foliage along the way to both resorts is extremely dense and truly demonstrates what the color green is all

Fiji's Somosomo Strait, a circus of life and color.



of fish, eels, seasnakes, leaffish and just about every other animal you dreamed of finding in Fiji. A typical day includes two single tank dives; one in the early morning and, after lunch, a second, early afternoon dive.

Most of the diving is in currents that range from a gentle flow to warp speed. Don't worry though, the dive-masters for these resorts have an excellent understanding of the currents and tidal exchanges of the Somosomo Strait, making current diving a breeze. In fact, if you have any fears about current diving, this is the place to rid yourself of them.

The first and most important part of learning to dive Taveuni is listening to the briefing. By giving the divemaster your attention you will learn how to get to the bottom, where to go and where

Taveuni



Fiji's Diving Gem

TEXT AND PHOTOGRAPHY
BY JACK AND SUE DRAFAHL

about. It's not uncommon to see huge leafy plants and flowers growing in the wild, plants you would expect to see only in expensive greenhouses stateside.

When you look at a map of the island you will see that your trip from the airport has only scratched the surface of what Taveuni has to offer. The south-east coast is lined with dozens of waterfalls, many of which are accessible through resort tours. One of the better known is 60 foot Bouma Falls, perfect for half and full day trips of hiking and swimming in the pools below the waterfalls. The falls are only about a ten minute walk from the main road through well manicured trails that lead to picnic tables, benches and a changing room. If you are adventuresome, you can make the 30 minute hike to a second 100 foot waterfall or even a third that is 25 feet high. Each has its own special beauty, unique to Fiji.

Before we look at the other adven-

tures found in Taveuni, let's move from fresh water to salt and talk about the main reason you would probably come to this peaceful island.

Diving at Taveuni is mainly in the Somosomo Strait, where the current exchange brings nutrient filled waters. This creates an intense environment, thick with soft corals, hard corals, tons



Above: Susan Savela takes a close look at what seems to be a fluorescent anemone-fish. After diving off Taveuni you may find yourself disappointed anywhere else. Right: Pre-dive on a Garden Island Resort dive boat.

Taveuni, Fiji



the currents drop to a minimum.

We could do a whole article on current diving in the strait but it's already been done (SDM May '92) and it's an excellent source of additional information. If you didn't read that issue, we will give it to you in a nutshell. Comfortable current diving is a combination of streamlined equipment, a proper understanding of current flow and proper swimming techniques. Equipment drag will slow you down and cause you to use additional energy. Keep your hoses and dangling equipment close to your body. Put your snorkel in a pocket or away from your facemask. Snug your mask up an extra notch and keep the air in your BC to a minimum.

Photographers have an additional problem as cameras create drag. If you use a wide angle system, fold up the flash arms until you are on the bottom. When you are swimming from one location to the next, hold the camera system close and parallel to your body. If you can hold it next to your tank there will be almost no drag. Have your system set on your favorite setting so you can tuck the camera away until you need to get that perfect shot.

When you jump into the water, make sure you time it close to your buddy's entrance. Move quickly to the bottom and look for small coral bommies. The current slows at these locations and will allow you to regroup. When you and your buddy are together, swim behind a bommie and you will find the current is minimal or maybe even nonexistent. You can then swim out into the current for your pictures, quickly seeking refuge behind the bommie afterward.

If the current gets stronger, concentrate on places where you can hold onto the bottom without endangering the animal life. Don't use live coral to steady yourself, look instead for a small dead area of the reef or a rock as a handhold. This keeps you in control so you don't come crashing into the coral unexpectedly.

On your first dive in the Somosomo Strait make sure you watch the dive-master and see how he/she uses the currents. Because of the high concen-

One Fijian word, *lomelagi*, perfectly sums up Taveuni's indescribable diving—heaven!



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TAVEUNI, FIJI

tration of animal life there is a tendency to maximize your first dive and see as much as possible. Regardless of your diving background, use the first dive to shake down your equipment and diving techniques. This will make the remainder of your dives a dream. Once you master current diving, you will wonder why you ever had any concerns.

Conditions in the Somosomo Strait are very diverse. The bottom is quite different on each of the 20 plus dive spots and includes everything from bommies, slopes, walls, canyons, caves and flat bottoms. The reef itself is called **Rainbow Reef** and you will understand why as soon as you jump into the water. Soft corals thrive

TAVEUNI DIVE OPERATORS

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(011) 679-880-466 (fax)

Garden Island Resort/

Rainbow Reef Divers

(011) 679-880-286/254

(011) 679-880-288 (fax)

here and come in every size, shape and color you can imagine.

If you like leaf fish, you should look on the backside of the bommies, where the current is at a minimum. They usually prefer calmer conditions, where they can sit and pose for photographers. Fish have the same problems as divers, so they hang around these areas to rest and pick up food that swirls into them. We have also seen many cleaning stations here, which always provide great photo opportunities.

As you swim along you may see an orange glow on the side of the bommie. This is actually an anemone reacting like some of the fluorescent corals found in Fiji. When we saw our first fluorescing anemone we thought it was unique to the area, then we found even more on the next dive. What really seemed strange was that the clownfish themselves seem to glow just like the anemones. Confirming this sounds like a good excuse to make another trip to Taveuni, although most any excuse to dive there is acceptable!

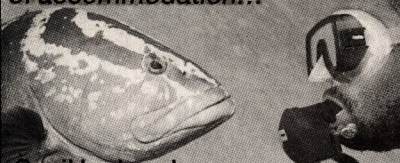
One of the most famous dive sites off Taveuni is the **Great White Wall**, a huge wall of white soft corals. The visibility here is excellent and makes for outstanding wide angle photography. Another favorite of photographers is **Annie's Bommie**, where the soft coral rainbow colors are in full effect. Other favorites describe the site with their name: **Barracuda Point, Fish Factory, Cabbage Patch, The Ledge,**

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Okay, let's look at what else you can do at Taveuni. If diving isn't enough you can explore a warrior burial cave in a 1,200

GETTING THERE

Flights to Fiji are available through Air Pacific and Qantas. The nonstop



Air Pacific flight from Los Angeles to Fiji's International Airport in Nadi is approximately 10 hours. Taveuni can be reached via a short, one hour flight, arranged through a local carriers, Air Fiji.




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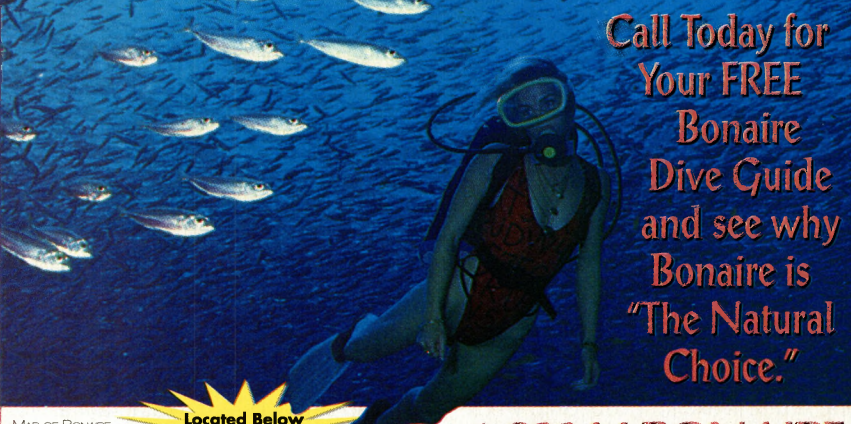
foot lava tube or maybe take advantage of some of the best birdwatching in the Fiji Islands. Other attractions include Lake Tagimaucia in an old crater high in the mountains, a rock waterslide near the Garden Island Resort or a visit to some of the friendly local villages. If you are a true sport enthusiast, you can go horseback riding, use paddle boats or hike the many trails around Taveuni. If it's starting to look as if you'll need to stay two weeks to truly enjoy this dive trip, you may be right. That's why so many Taveuni divers return year after year. If you have not been to Taveuni, be sure to put it high on your priority list. You won't regret it. 🐠

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SKIN DIVER JUNE 1996 107



TEXT AND PHOTOGRAPHY BY BILL HARRIGAN

Aruba! More than just an island name, it's an invitation to come and play. Whether your game is sailing, waterskiing, windsurfing, golf or tennis, Aruba has it. And, oh yes, diving Aruba is exciting, too. Shipwrecks, reefs and airplanes—it's all here!

I had the opportunity recently to dive with three of Aruba's top dive operations and found their standard of service excellent. In fact, I would look forward to diving with any of them again. They all have certain characteristics in common, including talented and personable captains, instructors and divemasters. They all also feature quality rental equipment, well maintained compressors and custom dive boats. As their names suggest, all of these companies can provide you with the toys for a wide variety of other watersports. You can sign up for waterskiing, windsurfing, kayaking, tubing or a wild tow on a "banana boat" at the same time you set up your dive schedule.

My host for the first day of diving was Martin Molina, the owner and managing director of Pelican Watersports. Martin introduced me to dive manager Ernst Meyer, who took me through the sign-up and gear rental on Pelican Dock. *Reef Runner*, the fast 32 foot boat used for south coast dives, was tied up only a few feet away. Set up for 10 to 15 divers, depending on whether it's a one or two tank trip, *Reef Runner* has an open transom for easy exits and good hand holds for security. Pelican has two other dive boats, a 35 foot cathedral hull called *Sea Thru* and an Answer 22 called *Divemaster*. Eight PADI instructors and three divemasters give Pelican the ability to teach any course from Discover Scuba to assistant instructor, as well

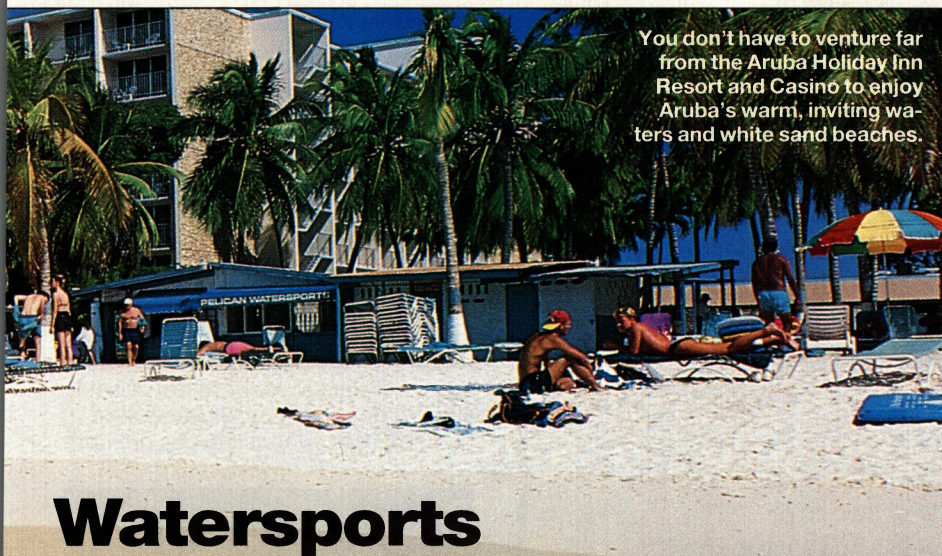
as a long list of PADI specialty courses.

Pelican Watersports is on the beach adjacent to the Holiday Inn Aruba Beach Resort and Casino, a full service hotel with a restaurant and bar right on the beach. Land tours and rental cars can be arranged in the lobby, where there are several fine jewelry and clothing shops.

On day two I shifted over to Unique Sports of Aruba, owned and managed by Emmet and Su Zanne Kimble. Emmet has put a lot of personal effort into customizing Unique's 40 foot aluminum Striker designed boat and it really pays off in comfort and convenience for divers. The huge, carpeted dive platform makes for sure footing and there is plenty of seating in or out of the sun. Personal service, such as courtesy pick-up and drop-off at your hotel, is what makes Unique unique. You'll also notice the personal touch when you're handed a glass of iced cola drink and a fresh, dry towel after the dive. With six instructors on staff, Unique Sports of Aruba always has someone knowledgeable ready to assist and, of course, PADI courses through assistant instructor are available.

Unique Sports of Aruba is right outside your door when you stay at the Aruba Palm Beach Resort and Casino. There is an Olympic-sized pool and you'll have a sweeping ocean view from your window.

Angela Tromp, the dive manager of Red Sail Sports, introduced me to the Red Sail dive team for my third day of Aruba diving. With six PADI instructors on staff, Red Sail Sports can also handle any course through assistant instructor. In addition, two Handicapped Scuba Association instructors and a fully



You don't have to venture far from the Aruba Holiday Inn Resort and Casino to enjoy Aruba's warm, inviting waters and white sand beaches.



Red Sail Sports' complete line of watersport toys includes the 40 foot dive boat, Vista Mar.

Watersports Capital of the Caribbean

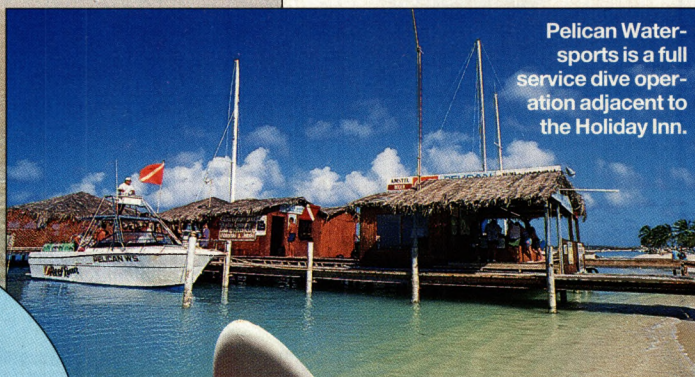


accessible boat give Red Sail the ability to accommodate divers challenged by a wide range of handicaps. The *Vista Mar* is a beamy 40 foot dive boat, custom designed for Red Sail Sports, which provides lots of room for 20 divers. A large camera table in the center also provides storage for the courtesy towels. Two big rinse tanks are built into the sides of the boat at the stern, where there are two fresh-water showers. *Vista Mar* has a marine toilet aboard and a broad top for protection from the sun. Complimentary fresh fruit is passed around after the dive and there are two coolers with lemonade and water. A Rob Shirley Pro 42 dive boat with twin diesels powering jet drives has recently been added to the Red Sail fleet. This fast boat is set up for a maximum of 20 divers and is used primarily to dive the south coast.

Red Sail Sports is affiliated with the luxurious Hyatt Regency hotels and is next to the Hyatt Regency Aruba Resort and Casino. If you are ready to pamper yourself with elegant surroundings, personal service, large rooms and fabulous views, the Hyatt is the place to stay.

DIVING ARUBA

Most of the dive sites of Aruba are on the southern and western sides of the island, protected from the waves and wind normally present on the northeastern coast. The visi-



Pelican Watersports is a full service dive operation adjacent to the Holiday Inn.



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Victoria Hartman of Pelican Watersports inspects the heavily encrusted propeller of the *Jane Sea*.

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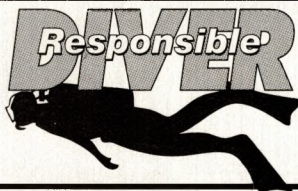
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ARUBA

bility on the south coast is usually in the 60 to 100 foot range. It may be slightly lower at west coast sites but the wrecks there make up for the difference. The current is generally slight to none; however, on those infrequent occasions a moderate current is running, the visibility can exceed 100 feet. In any case, the reefs are ideal for drift diving, so you don't have to worry about overexerting yourself. The south coast reef starts in about 15 feet of water, sloping down at a moderate grade to about 60 feet, where it drops off more



Red Sail Sports is next to the luxurious Hyatt Regency Aruba Resort and Casino.

steeply to about 120 feet. The west coast has a flatter profile and the dives are generally shallower. Excellent diving is also possible on the north coast but that side of the island is exposed almost continuously to strong winds and currents, so diving there is restricted to the few times conditions are right.

Aruba will satisfy divers of any experience level but the island's operators don't cater primarily to people who want five dives a day. Aruba is ideally suited to those who want to make two or maybe three dives a day and then sample other activities. Aruba is also a great place to bring a nondiving friend or spouse to get certified. The conditions are not strenuous and there lots of other diversions when you are not diving. The water temperature in Aruba only varies a few degrees on either side of 82°F, so a thick wetsuit is not necessary. A 2 or 3mm wetsuit, a shorty or even a dive skin should be comfortable.

ARUBA DIVE SITES

The German captain who scuttled the freighter *Antilla* on the 10th of May, 1940, couldn't have foreseen that he was creating one of the best dive sites in the Caribbean. In the intervening 56 years, the ship has grown a thick coat of coral and sponges. In fact, it bristles with countless Green and Purple Tube Sponges. Even the cables supporting the short mast and crow's nest are en-

crusted with them. Some surprisingly large Smooth Brain Corals are attached to sections of cranes and railings and clumps of Silver Tunicates cling to the hull like patches of blistered paint. An unusual colony of Green Feather Bush Hydroids extends out from the bow. Naturally, all of this makes a wonderful habitat for reef fish.

Part of the wreck still extends above the surface and if you look up you can

ARUBA INFORMATION

Red Sail Sports at the Hyatt Regency Aruba Resort and Casino, and other locations in Aruba and the Caribbean
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Unique Sports of Aruba at the Aruba Palm Beach Resort and Casino
(800) 345-2782

Pelican Watersports at the Holiday Inn Aruba Beach Resort and Casino
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sometimes see the pelicans diving for fish from their perches. There are a number of easy but very interesting penetrations. The local divemasters know the *Antilla* inside and out and they can guide you on a memorable dive. Plan on visiting the *Antilla* more than once, though, because there is so much to see.

Mike's Reef is a symphony of Star Corals, Brain Corals and tall gorgonians. Beneath the green exterior of the coral you can see splashes of orange, red and yellow, where boring and encrusting sponges have taken hold. These crevices are also home to numerous Spiny and Spanish Lobster and some impressively long Green Moray Eels. We drifted Mike's reef in a moderate current that also brought in clear, blue water with visibility of more than 100 feet. The intense competition for space among the corals was easy to see as we drifted past overlapping boulders of Giant Star, Smooth Brain, Grooved Brain and Star Corals. Bring a waterproof fish identification chart; you'll need it to keep track.

We also enjoyed super visibility for a dive on the *Jane Sea*, a 250 foot freighter sunk intentionally as an artificial reef. Looking up from the propeller at 95 feet, I could see well more than halfway to the bow. The ship rests upright on a slope, with the top of the bow about 50 feet from the surface. *Jane Sea* wears a lighter coat of coral than the *Antilla* but the colors are already brilliant. Orange Cup Corals, Fire Coral and black Deep Water Seafans grow in abundance. There are even a couple of pale green Black Coral formations on the port side. The surrounding reef is also excellent, with the abundance of hard corals typical of the south coast.

(Continued on Page 178)

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Bonaire's Sunset Beach Hotel and Sunset Beach Dive Center

**Fun in the Sun
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photo/Jerry Schmabel

TEXT AND PHOTOGRAPHY BY SUSAN L. SWYGERT

The beauty of Bonaire beneath the sea continues to lure divers from all over the world. Lush and colorful coral reefs (protected by the laws of the Bonaire Marine Park) are unbelievably close to shore and teem with an innumerable variety of tropical fish. Bonaire is Caribbean diving at its best and the combination of dependable sunny weather, calm, azure seas and incredibly easy dive site access via boat or shore just seems too good to be real. How fortunate we are that it is true and a Bonaire vacation is high on every dive enthusiast's list.

Listen up—how does a week of free diving in Bonaire sound? Sunset Beach

Dive Center needs help naming its new boat and is offering the lucky person who submits the best name a six day unlimited dive package. Currently, the busy dive shop has three boats—the 38 foot *Sea Explorer*, 36 foot *Sea Horse* and 36 foot *Sea Gull*. Custom designed in Venezuela by owner Anton van der Heetkamp, the new dive boat is a 36 foot fiberglass V-hull featuring twin in-board diesels with jet drive. The swift, powerful boat will sport a flying bridge, providing shade and increasing the available deck space. The unnamed boat promises a roomy, comfortable interior, perfect for divers.

Not only is there free diving but the lovely Sunset Beach Hotel is awarding the winner one free week of accommodations for two as well! What a great way to visit this charming island and discover the amazing underwater world of Bonaire for yourself.

The planned delivery date of the boat is mid-June and all entries must be received by July 31, 1996. Get your brain in gear and send your choice in right away. The only rule is that the name must start with the word *Sea*, ie. *Sea _____*. Fax Sunset Beach Dive Center at (011) 599-7-8330 or mail your entry to P.O. Box 92, Bonaire, Netherlands Antilles. Be

sure to include your return address, telephone and fax numbers on your entry. There is only one entry allowed per person; entries of the same boat name will, of course, be taken in order received—so get your entry in early!

Mary DiSanza and Walter Stark, Sunset Beach Dive Center's management team, eagerly anticipate welcoming the winner to Bonaire and turning him or her and a guest onto the island's underwater reefs. After a little more than six years of living on Bonaire, Mary and Walter confirm they are fortunate to work at one of the top diving destinations in the world. Walter says the island's location

"makes the weather just about perfect." He claims that reef protection since the early '70s, "owing to the island's government and inhabitants strongly supporting the development and growth of the Bonaire Marine Park," is the backbone of Bonaire's continually growing reputation.

Bonaire, Netherlands Antilles, is a sister island to Curaçao and Aruba in the southern Caribbean just 50 miles north of Venezuela, far below the hurricane belt. A typical day is hot and sunny, though cooling trade winds bathe the island from east to west. Great weather is virtually guaranteed 365 days a year. Bonaire's unique north/south orientation yields 24 miles of protected leeward coast, whose calm, clear waters make diving easy and fun.

The Bonaire Marine Park was the first of its kind in the Caribbean to preserve an entire island. Legislation protects all the surrounding waters and its inhabitants from the high water mark to a depth of 200 feet. Spearfishing and anchoring are banned and it is forbidden to remove anything living or dead from the reefs. An annual admission fee of U.S. \$10 is charged

all divers, visitors and residents. These funds are used to maintain the mooring system, employ park rangers and support research and educational efforts.

Moorings are permanently fixed to the seafloor—a buoy on the surface marks the site and the dive boat ties up to it. There is no need to use an anchor, which can drastically damage the fragile reef. Captain Don Stewart, one of the scuba industry's pioneers, developed the first moorings almost 30 years ago off Bonaire and this long history of reef conservation has been instrumental in preserving the beauty of many shallow reefs. Today, moorings have been placed at more than 70 dive sites along the coast and surrounding the uninhabited island of Klein Bonaire (Little Bonaire). The Bonaire Marine Park has also placed vivid yellow stones, inscribed with dive site names, on shore entry points along the leeward coast.

The Sunset Beach Dive Center is on the water's edge, along the Sunset Beach Hotel's beautiful beach. Daily single tank boat trips are on a staggered schedule—9:00 or 9:30 am and 2:00 or



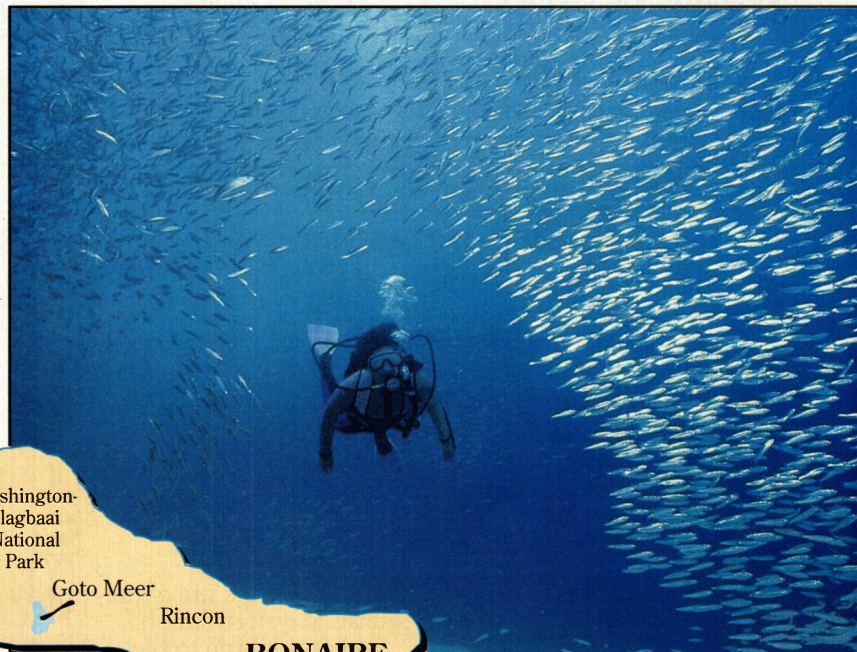
A variety of watertoys, including Ocean Kayaks, are available at the Recreation and Watersports Center on Playa Lechi Beach.



Guests relax in Sunset Beach Hotel's sea-side freshwater pool. Left: A diver explores the gorgonians, sponges and myriad organisms thriving on the pilings of Salt Pier.



Above: The dive center's managers, Walter Stark and Mary DiSanza, with owner, Anton van der Heetkamp. Below: For instruction or shore divers, Front Porch is an excellent dive site with easy access.



A glittering school of Bigeye Scad surrounds a diver at Front Porch, where there is a shallow plateau and steep drop-off right offshore the dive center.



2:30 pm departures. Tanks for shore diving are available around the clock and the white sand beach offers one of the island's easiest entries. **Front Porch**, a popular beach dive, has a shallow plateau densely covered with coral growth and a steep drop-off very close to shore. Teeming with fish—French Angelfish cruise the reef's crest and schools of silver baitfish swirl beneath the

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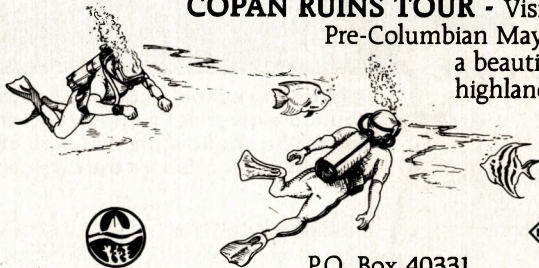
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SUNSET BEACH HOTEL AND DIVE CENTER

pier—and boasting the wreck of the **New York**, a small tugboat encrusted with vivid corals and sponges, this is one of Bonaire's typical easy and fun sites. All divers make a warmup dive here first and, as a result, inevitably make plans to access this almost too easy site again and again for day and night dives.

The dive center's retail shop offers a variety of gear and souvenirs for sale, as well as snorkeling and diving equipment rentals, camera and video rentals, and daily film processing. Many instructional courses are offered by the multi-lingual staff, from learning to dive to coral reef ecology.

Sunset Beach Hotel is known for its comfortable atmosphere and moderate pricing. With many amenities, a professional dive center and one of the prettiest white sand beaches on the island, Sunset Beach Hotel offers a complete resort atmosphere that is sure to please.

The Sunset Beach Hotel has been in business since 1989 under the management of Sunset Resorts, owned and operated by Hugo Gerharts, a much esteemed Bonairean entrepreneur. In the last year, the 24 rooms in the two beach wings closest the dive shop, beach and restaurant were completely refurbished. The bathrooms are new, the floors are now tiled, bright lighting fixtures and attractive vertical blinds as well as new windows have been installed, and all new furnishings and linens purchased. Altogether, there is a much more spacious and *au courant* Caribbean look. As always, the rooms, unlike many on Bonaire, feature in-room telephones and cable television, as well as a mini-fridge, an electronic safe and comfortable split unit air-conditioners and hot water in every room. The new resident manager, David Hickey, says these improvements have been very well received by returning visitors who notice that something's new.

Also new to the property is Sunset's Coffeehouse, formerly a seaside game room, adjacent to the reception area. Perfect for warmly welcoming dive groups, the coffeehouse is a cozy place in the morning for pie and a creamy cappuccino or to enjoy an evening drink or specialty coffee and fresh pastry.

Playa Lechi (Milk Beach) is home to Playa Lechi Restaurant, the Recreation and Watersports Center, as well as the Sunset Beach Dive Center. The constant trade winds foster an ideal sailing environment and Andre Beckers, the Recreation and Watersports Center manager, offers windsurfing instruction, as well as windsurfers and Ocean Kayaks for rental. Water taxi service to town for shopping or

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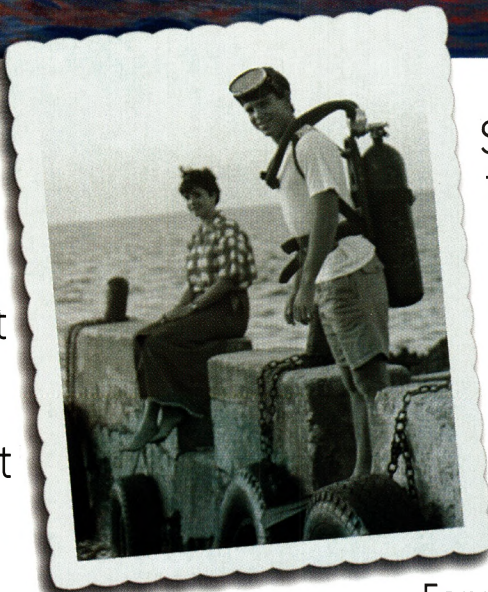
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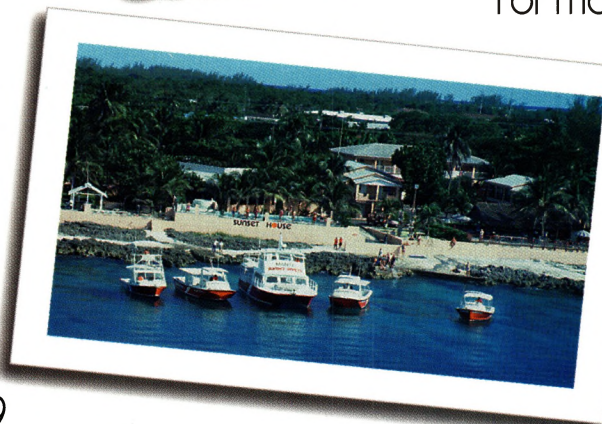
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to Klein Bonaire for a private picnic and snorkel can easily be arranged to fit guests' schedules. Beach chairs, towels, rafts and a freshwater shower are available. There is even a seaside freshwater pool. The whole beach setup is ideal for families, who can enjoy sunbathing and snorkeling as well as diving. To see the sights beyond the Sunset Beach Hotel, rent a sturdy mountain bike from the resort or a vehicle from Budget Rent-A-Car.

The Playa Lechi Restaurant and Bar has as comfortable an ambiance as any restaurant on the island. An authentic South American Indian thatched roof covers the *al fresco* dining room and bar. The nearby beach provides the natural music of gently lapping waves. A five star chef is on staff and the food is really good—menu nights feature a complete chef's choice meal as well as a variety of entrees. Theme buffet nights such as the Bonairean Night include native Antillean dishes and fresh fish, and the folkloric dance show with local music is very entertaining. Friday night's Beach Barbecue features a great steel band. Breakfast and lunch boxes are easily available for excursion lovers.

Great for dive groups and families, with plenty of laidback activities and amenities for the nondiver and moderately priced as well, Sunset Beach Hotel and the Sunset Beach Dive Center will ensure a relaxing idyll or a busy, watersport filled vacation on beautiful Bonaire.

If you don't win the prize for naming the boat, contact Caradonna Caribbean Tours and inquire about the Bonaire Bon-Anza, an unbeatable package at the hotel. Summer rates are extremely good and include airfare from Miami, seven nights' accommodations, daily breakfast, unlimited shore diving and a daily single tank boat dive, one day car rental and even a free gift.

For complete information and reservations, call Ann Caradonna and her team of experienced scuba diving travel specialists at (800) 328-2288 or (407) 774-9000; fax (407) 862-6000.

For divers interested in more luxurious and private accommodations, Sunset Resorts has many apartments and villas for rental. Choose from a variety of seaside or in town locations and enjoy all the amenities of the Sunset Beach Hotel as well. To speak to Sunset Resorts directly for reservations and information for the Sunset Beach Hotel or Sunset Villas, call (011) 599-7-8291 or 8448; fax (011) 599-7-8118 or 8865.

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1996 Dive Travel Guide to COZUMEL



A Divers' Utopia in The Mexican Caribbean

TEXT AND PHOTOGRAPHY BY RICK FREHSEE

Cozumel is only 12 miles from the huge and mystic Yucatan Peninsula in southeastern Mexico. Known by the ancient Maya as *Cuzamil*, the Place of the Swallows, the 12 by 30 mile island (Mexico's largest Caribbean island) is today one of the most popular diving destinations in the world.

A divers' utopia, Cozumel has a superb underwater environment, myriad hotels and dive operations and is close to the continental United States. It is also an exceptional value.

There is even more. Underlying almost everything there is to see or do in Cozumel is a unique backbone of fun and friendship. This is definitely *amigo* country. In addition to excellent diving, there is shopping, dining and "funning" galore. And, if you want to add a significant above water cultural or environmental discovery to your visit, you can ferry (a little more than an hour) or fly (15 to 30 minutes) to the Yucatan mainland to visit lagoons, forests and/or some of the most visually attractive and significant archaeological sites within *Mundo Maya* (The Maya World).

The facts and flavors of Cozumel are cumulative. Here is a sun and fun island of beaches and lagoons, where you can dive in a coral strewn crystal sea, stay in the hotel, resort or guesthouse of your choice, eat wonderful Mexican or continental cuisine and gather socially at some of the most charming or outrageous watering holes in the entire

Caribbean. Wandering around San Miguel's town plaza, especially on Sunday night, will reveal a rural charm no different than it was 20 years ago. It should be noted that the modernization of Cozumel has brought with it the purification of water and ice at almost every hotel or restaurant. Stomach problems associated with water or food have very nearly been eliminated.

THE DIVING ENVIRONMENT

The underwater environment in Cozumel has two constants: excellent visibility and a noticeable current, usually moving from south to north. Normally, the underwater visibility is among the best of any ocean or sea in the world; the average is more than 100 feet and often 200 or more. Seldom is it ever less than 80 feet.

The geography of Cozumel and the nearby Yucatan presents an excellent stage for coral growth and marine life proliferation. Physical conditions actually inhibit any disturbances to the crystal sea. Both the island and the vast peninsula are low, flat, porous and nearly rain-starved. Most rainfall in Cozumel comes in quick summer showers or in a few winter "northers" and soaks almost immediately into the porous limestone bedrock. There are no rivers on Cozumel and very few on the mainland. Marshes and even mangrove swamps are only at the extreme northern and southern ends of the island. Cozumel's subtropical lo-



Top: The strangely beautiful Splendid Toadfish (*Sanopus splendidus*) is endemic to Cozumel. Above: Tormentos Reef.



Left: Sponges twisted into wild shapes by Cozumel's offshore currents. Top: A Maya woman plies her wares in the San Miguel marketplace. Below: Maracaibo Shallows.

El Caracol, a Maya temple on Cozumel, stands in defiance of time and challenges the imagination.



Mexicana Airlines, the national carrier, provides the most popular daily service to Cozumel from several U.S. gateway cities.

cation provides mild air and water temperatures year-round. Water temperatures vary only about 11 degrees; the summer high is 85°F, the winter low about 76°F.

MARINE LIFE

Cozumel reefs are generally very healthy and free of disturbance or decay. They present a complete selection of soft and hard corals, reef invertebrates and marine fishes, both individual and

schooling as well as inshore and pelagic. Environmental education and reef conservation have been in practice for more than a decade. With only a few exceptions, it is difficult to detect any change in the quality of the coral reefs since recreational diving began here in the mid 1960s. Nearly the entire leeward (western) coastal reef tract is protected as a national marine park.

The reef formations are generally offshore striated fringing reefs, often bor-

dering the western drop-off. Most shallow diving (10 to 30 feet), including a few areas where shore diving is possible, is done along nearby shore patch reefs, ledges or pinnacles. Medium depth reefs, from 30 to 60 feet, while not numerous, are very well formed. Most boat diving is done from one-quarter to one-half mile or more offshore over massive reef pinnacles and fringing reefs that spill over a deep sloping shelf or vertical wall. Reefs bordering walls that begin at medi-

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COZUMEL

um to deep depths of 80 to 100 feet parallel nearly the entire 30 mile length of the island and extend around the southern tip. Diving here is popular and nearly continuous. A happy note: In spite of its popularity, there is no waiting for a particular site and seldom is a reef area crowded. Drift diving allows a variety of entry positions and the current prevents groups from congregating at any one site. More about Cozumel drift diving techniques later.

The size and colors of Cozumel's reef system is sure to make an outstanding impression. There is a proliferation of sponges in several hues of orange, particularly in encrusting, rope and tube shapes. Also very noticeable are huge formations of Buff Tube Sponges, pastel or muted in color and formed alternately as symmetrical tubes or in great twisted and gnarled shapes influenced by the currents. The great coral heads leaning over the drop-off are popcorn shaped, with spires and pinnacles, ledges and overhangs, tunnels and fissures. The reefs are dominated by lobular and massive displays of Star, Starlet and Brain Corals and an abundance of Lettuce and Shingle Corals. In places, there are fields of Cluttip Finger Coral and concentrations of Staghorn and Elkhorn Corals. Often, just before or along the drop-off, you will encounter giant Barrel and Basket Sponges, their shapes often modified by current.

Owing to the closeness of the major reef areas to the drop-off, many sites provide a mixture of reef, schooling and pelagic fish. The Cozumel reef tract is at the northern end of the Great Western Barrier Reef, a vast coral system now becoming known as the Great Maya Reef, stretching from



the top of the Yucatan Peninsula all the way to Honduras. Both the size and continuity of this reef and the almost constant easterly trade winds, contribute to a biological path of complexity and diversity. It is therefore difficult to list what you might see in Cozumel; from minnows to Mantas and from wrasses to Whale Sharks, anything is possible. Usual fish encounters include numerous blennies and gobies tucked into reef recesses, pairs or trios of beautiful French or Queen Angelfish and, quite often, a solitary Splendid Toadfish. Encountered day or night, the Splendid Toadfish is fairly easy to locate in Cozumel and nearly impossible to find elsewhere. Common but site specific, are huge groupers and Barracuda and one or more large silvery Tarpon. Several Cozumel reef sites are known for big, friendly Green Moray Eels or several 25 to 80 pound Black Groupers. Invertebrates common to Cozumel include a wide assortment of crabs, several species of nudibranchs, three or four species of shrimp symbiotic to the big *Condylactus* anemone and two

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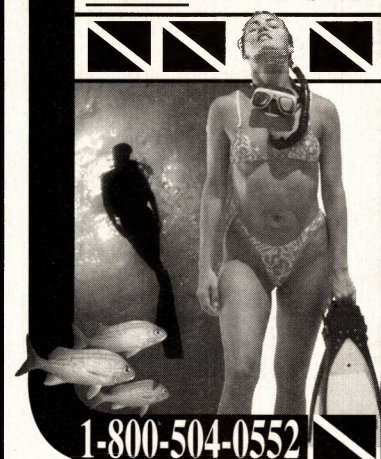
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species of Caribbean Octopus. Recently, a divemaster showed me a seahorse only 50 feet from shore.

COZUMEL, THE ISLAND

Cozumel is a medium-sized island with a relaxed atmosphere. The island is distinctly flat (the tallest point is about 44 feet above sea level) and comprised of a rugged limestone matrix capped with scrub, low bush and dry tropical forest. Visitors congregate, inhabit and socialize around San Miguel, a "typical" little Mexican town arranged around a pleasant plaza.

Although common sense should always be applied, petty or street crime is almost nonexistent. Cozumel continues to be very highly recommended in terms of personal safety.

Almost everyone connected to the hotel and hospitality industry speaks English, ranging from fluent to at least enough to communicate. Within eight blocks of the central plaza are literally hundreds of shops, restaurants, lounges and snack bars. Within several miles of town are dozens of dive operations and hotels. Many shops and businesses close in the afternoon for several hours (*siesta*) but are open again from 5:00 pm until 8:00 or 9:00 pm. Dive operators and retail shops are generally open all day long and into the early evening.

HOTELS/GUESTHOUSES

All classes and styles of accommodations are available on Cozumel. There are

moderately priced, high-rise resort hotels normally identified as "four or five star" establishments and private houses or villas for rental. Excellent dedicated dive resorts, small traditional hotels and super all-inclusive resorts complete the variety. Most of the nicer hotels have pools, restaurants, a beachside activities center or dedicated dive operation, scooter and car rental offices and a concierge or in-house travel desk to assist with either on-island or Yucatan excursions. Guestrooms are often on the beach or facing a garden or pool. Most rooms are air-conditioned, have a patio and many are equipped with phone, cable TV and minibar. Full baths are usually standard. Many suites and condos are equipped with a kitchenette or full kitchen. Most of the larger hotels offer full meals and a built-in diving package. Because of the large number of restaurants a short walk or taxi ride away, hotel packages without meals or with breakfast only are also popular. There are currently many good condominium and private home rentals available, usually by the week. These provide increased privacy and family style accommodations that may provide a definite price advantage for groups of four to six. These are offered through several agencies on the island.

Traditionally, hotels and resorts on Cozumel have been divided into zones—northern, central and southern. The northern hotels extend along a quiet beachfront strip for three miles just north of town and are comprised of a few of the nicer hotels on the island plus all-inclusive club style resorts. The downtown hotels are mid-sized, traditional hotels mostly owned and managed by locals (called

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Cozumeleños). The central zone hotels are less self-contained and rely upon in-town dive operations and restaurants, all within walking distance. Many of the most popular self-contained hotels and dive resorts are just south to a ten minute taxi ride south of downtown.

COZUMEL DIVE OPERATORS

There are more than three dozen dive operations currently operating on Cozumel. About half of these are full service and carry the most common affiliations (PADI, NAUI, SSI, etc.). About a dozen can be immediately recognized as operators, with a full contingent of boats, equipment, personnel, etc. One-half dozen of these are rated as among the best in the Caribbean and can be recognized by their reputations, affiliations, offerings, schedules, etc. These operators will have a fleet of mid-sized boats; they generally set a maximum number of divers per boat at 16 to 18 and there is oxygen, first aid and a marine radio aboard each vessel. The larger operators are generally the best established but there are also a few small freelance instructors of high quality that cater to one to six divers.

The island offers a number of dive operator options. Hotel packages will often include an in-house or dedicated operator. Some provide a choice of operator and others will leave you to make dive arrangements on your own. Some of the

on-site operators will arrange for pickups at a number of hotel docks. Some entirely independent operators depend totally on walk-in traffic. Operators vary in size from large complexes with a fleet of mid-sized boats to a single instructor-guide with a single six pack (six passenger) small outboard. In Cozumel, it is quite popular to stay at a hotel and dive with a completely unrelated operator.

The following suggestions will help you select a dive operator in Cozumel:

1. Experienced dive wholesalers who provide Cozumel packages have already researched and found quality operators.

2. Rely on the recommendations of an established Cozumel hotelier who has also used experience as a measuring stick.

3. Visit several operators and check out the personnel, boats and equipment for yourself. Most quality dive operators rely on their boats to speak for the professionalism of the operation. What are the instructional affiliations? What does the equipment look like?

4. A two tank am or pm dive should run about \$50 U.S. If it's more, you might expect a little more in service or equipment. If it's a little less, there is a good chance corners are being cut somewhere.

SPECIALTY DIVING

Popular forms of specialty diving in Cozumel include computer diving (special programs other than general use),

current diving instruction or review, custom small boat dives and marine life identification and appreciation courses. Most of the major operators schedule small boat specialty excursions on a regular or per need basis. Photography and videography instruction and rentals, custom video and photo shoots and print and slide developing are also available. One operator on the island is offering cenote (sinkhole and cavern) diving on Cozumel.

Safari treks to Aereolito de Paraiso and other caverns on Cozumel are scheduled on a periodic basis. Some of these caverns are reported to be among the most dripstone (stalactite and stalagmite) decorated underwater caves in the world. Shallow instructor-guided penetrations within sight of the opening are recreational dives; extended sojourns involve special training and techniques.

There is a new Enriched Air Nitrox Training and Supply Facility on Cozumel. This operation, certified and affiliated with PADI and IANTD (International Association of Nitrox and Technical Divers, Inc.), provides training and EAN 32, EAN 36 or custom oxygen enriched mixtures of up to 40 percent oxygen to nitrox certified divers through operators who host nitrox dive excursions.

DIVE BOATS AND SCHEDULING

Having a relatively long dive travel history, Cozumel has tried nearly every kind

Cozumel



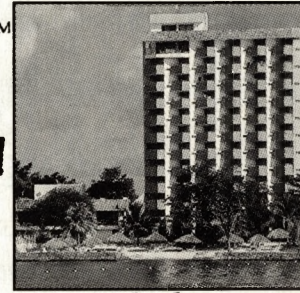
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COZUMEL

of dive boat imaginable. As diving has become more modern, faster, sleeker dive-specific hulls have come into use. Two basic designs for a mid-sized boat are now in use—the double hull and the modified V-hull. These designs offer greater stability and speed and are found throughout Cozumel. Smaller, six passenger vessels are almost always narrow

banana shaped vessels manufactured on the mainland and powered by twin outboards. A drop-in ladder facilitates boarding on the smaller boats.

Both mid-sized and six pack boats usually carry a minimum of a captain and at least one divemaster. Most modern fleets have a combination of several mid-sized boats and at least one twin outboard. (Hint: Dive groups of up to 18 can usually be assigned to one particular boat for the duration of their visit; small groups of six or less might well consider a small boat for custom diving

excursions. By commissioning a small boat, you can generally select the site and dive your own plan.)

Individual divers can walk in and sign up at the dive desk the day or evening before on a space available basis. A two tank morning trip usually departs between 8:00 to 9:00 am and around 2:00 pm for a single or two tank afternoon trip.

Night dives are offered almost every evening. (Hint: Some Cozumel operators offer early bird departures to get a jump on the diving day.)

CURRENT DIVING

While current off Cozumel is to be expected, its speed and direction are not always dependable or predictable. This calls for a special style of diving on the part of both the dive operator and individual buddy teams. It also demands a greater in-water control of diving groups and some flexibility in both site selection and dive plan. Planning, awareness and practice are the backbone of safe current diving technique.

The current may flow at speeds that are often intimidating to the new or inexperienced diver. The flow can even influence diving areas very close to shore. As a result, shore dives are often planned with separate entry and exit areas.

These suggestions will help familiarize you with current diving technique in Cozumel.

1. If you are new to current diving, notify your divemaster. Stick close to your buddy and your divemaster during the dive and watch for their signals and suggestions.

2. While it is effortless to flow with a current, it is often exhausting or futile to swim against it. Therefore, the dive profile, including safe bottom time, should reflect this fact. Your divemaster will jump in first and check the current—both speed and direction. He will then signal for the group to enter. Wait until the captain gives the signal and enter the water as a group without delay.

3. In current diving, the boat drifts along, following the group from above. If

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it is a glassy calm sea, it is easy to follow the exhaust bubbles as they billow on the surface. This technique, known as bubble tracking, is dependable under the right conditions. Another technique, the most popular, involves following a colorful surface buoy played out from a reel carried by the divemaster. A third technique sometimes employed uses a staff member snorkeling on the surface as a means of tracking the divers below. The boat then follows the snorkeler at a safe distance.

4. Any procedure used to track divers below is dependent upon the group staying together. This places a greater responsibility on each individual and buddy team. Divers generally must stay within sight of the group. With sizable groups, there will often be one divemaster leading and one at the rear to keep the group together. If you are low on air or are terminating the dive prematurely for any reason, you must notify the divemaster and ascend with your buddy.

5. The dive briefing performs an important safety function in current diving. In addition to a general description of the dive area, the divemaster will discuss specific procedures and any variations from normal technique.

6. During the dive, practice and experiment with modifying the current effect. Fighting a current for a period of time can be exhausting. However, slicing at an angle into a current is a compromise that allows you to change position safely. This technique, called crabbing, is useful in positioning yourself to the reef. Experienced divers also learn to "flare out" in order to slow forward movement. A good trick is to hover in the shadow of a large coral head in order to momentarily stop all forward progress.

7. Monitor depth and bottom time closely. Off Cozumel, the top of the reef or the drop-off will vary in depth from site to site and will often change during the dive. Another phenomenon to watch out for is down currents or downdrafts that often move you momentarily to greater depths. Each buddy team and, in fact, each diver is responsible for maintaining a safe dive profile. The divemaster may ask you to signal when you have reached a minimum tank pressure. When the thumbs-up signal is given, ascend at a safe rate with your group. Often a three or five minute safety stop is planned at 10 feet.

8. Once you are on the surface, locate

your boat and signal a single arm or double arm OK sign to the boat captain. From that point on, try not to turn your back to the boat. Face the boat as it approaches and wait your turn to board. Approach the boat only when the engines are in neutral and the captain has signaled you to approach. Often, a trailing line or current line will be deployed from the boat to retrieve returning divers. When it is your turn, enter the boat without hesitation using the technique outlined in the dive briefing.

9. After the dive is a good time to ask any questions regarding procedures. Share your thoughts and evaluation with your buddy and divemaster.

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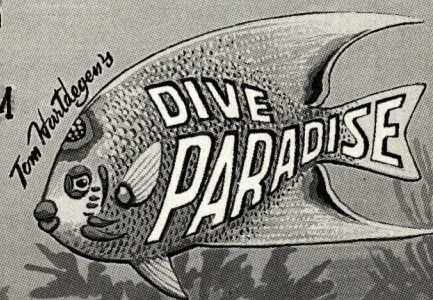
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COZUMEL

10. Always dive with a margin of safety, taking into consideration your experience level and the environmental conditions.

As a result of these procedures, the island of Cozumel compares with other popular Caribbean dive destinations in low accident rates. When accidents do occur, it is almost always the result of divers who exceed their level of experience or dive in unsafe conditions. Do not dive deeper than 90 feet unless you are in a special group and this has been cleared ahead of time with your operator and divemaster.

POPULAR DIVE SITES

Cozumel dive sites are always reefs and they are often positioned on or close to a wall. They are often named for a particular formation, on shore or below, but their exact locations are often vague. As there are no moorings, starting points for the dive vary. It is possible to dive the same site twice and see a totally different section of the reef. Nevertheless, there are about 30 named sites that are popular and universally known.

Our site list runs from north to south and varies from novice to expert in terms of physical and environmental conditions.

Villa Blanca Reef: A nearshore mini-

reef with huge sponges and seaweeds close to a sloping wall; reef fish and some pelagics.

Del Mar Reef: Also a popular shore dive, this is a series of patch reefs and a small wooden shipwreck, now mostly disintegrated.

La Ceiba Reef and Wreck: One of Cozumel's traditional shore snorkel or scuba dives. This is a medium profile reef with the scattered remains of an airplane wreck (now much modified by current), originally the underwater set for a Mexican adventure film.

Gorgonian Flats: As the name suggests, this is mostly a low profile reef covered with seaweeds and fans.

Paradise Reef: Traditionally Cozumel's most popular night dive and usually the home of several Splendid Toadfish. Paradise is a narrow, low profile reef running parallel to shore.

Caleta Reef: A mid-depth reef cut leading to the outer wall populated with coral fishes.

Dzul-ha Reef: Here the reef profile rises to the outside, forming a chain of mini-walls.

Chankanaab Reef: A series of medium profile coral heads close to shore; harbors reef and schooling fish in 10 to 30 feet of water.

Chankanaab Caverns: Beneath the limestone matrix of the shoreline is a series of caverns often filled with minnows, jacks, groupers and Tarpon.

Chankanaab Heads: Pinnacles and large puffs of coral rise quite abruptly from a flat, sand and Turtle Grass bottom.

Three Palms: An excellent mid-reef dive populated by an assortment of coral fishes and Southern Stingrays.

Tormentos Reef: Often divided into an upper, middle and lower section, the Tormentos is a very popular mid-reef (60 foot) dive with heads and ledges beautifully decorated in colorful sponges. Also notable is a good general assortment of marine fishes.

Tormentos Deep: A rather cryptic deep site that, with patience, ultimately divulges some very colorful niches on the wall.

Punta Tunich: Here you can find friendly groupers, lobsters, crabs and eels while you drift over a vibrant, colorful reef.

Yucab Reef: This is a dense, compact reef formation of abundant and colorful marine life, including groupers, angelfish, anemones and crabs.

San Francisco Reef: This is a popular mid-depth reef formation with a drop-off that begins in only 25 to 30 feet of water.

Santa Maria Reef: This reef offers good general scenery and a concentration of marine life.

Paso el Cedral: A series of caverns and fissures that support abundant marine life in a dense, colorful setting.

Santa Rosa Reef: One of Cozumel's all-time favorites, Santa Rosa is a nearly continuous series of tall, narrow coral heads bordering a steep, sloping wall. There are impressive sponges, colorful overhangs and huge tunnels.

Delilah Reef: A somewhat mysterious, difficult to locate site. The general area is distinctive, being a reef plateau separated by two coral spines.

(Note: The next seven sites comprise the famous Planacar Reef, a magnificent and extensive reef system.)

Palancar Gardens: A beautiful 40 to 70 foot dive loaded with color and many nice caverns.

Little Caves: A labyrinth of colorful canyons, deep ravines and narrow crevices in 50 to 70 feet of water.



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Big Horseshoe Reef: Giant coral heads just 20 feet below the surface.

Shallow Palancar: Lots of color, marine life and many narrow winding tunnels.

Little Horseshoe Reef: Majestic coral ridges rise, forming impressive canyons, caverns and swim-throughs.

Palancar Caves: Beautiful canyons, tunnels and caverns alive with color and marine life.

Palancar Deep: Pristine, rugged corals forming a wall that begins in 90 feet of water.

Cedral Wall: A fairly flat but colorful reef brimming with marine life in 50 to 90 feet of water.

Colombia Reef: Coral pinnacles tower over an impressive drop-off in 80 feet of water.

Colombia Shallows: Perhaps the most pristine shallow dive in Cozumel it is a sea garden teeming with marine life in 15 to 35 feet of water.

Punta Sur: A comparatively new and hot dive site for advanced divers. This is an elbow in the outer reef, with deep pinnacles forming incredible swim-throughs, including the famed Devil's Throat.

Chunchacab: This is an expert site that is somewhat difficult to locate. It is a series of colorful ledges and overhangs on a deep wall in 90 to 120 feet of water.

Maracaibo Reef: A deep reef and adjacent wall decorated with sponges. Too deep for recreational diving as the wall begins 100 feet or deeper.

Maracaibo Shallows: A misnomer, this is an area of medium profile coral heads just inside Maracaibo Reef, in 90 feet of water, that often harbors turtles and huge Barracuda.

Lighthouse Reef: A steep drop-off more than 100 feet deep and bathed in confusing currents. Stay inside at huge coral heads in 80 to 90 feet of water.

TRAVELING AND ARRIVAL

Mexicana, the national carrier, provides the most popular daily service to Cozumel or Cancun/Cozumel from several U.S. gateways.

You are required to have a U.S. passport to enter Mexico. The Cozumel Airport is a modern, practical facility and immigration, baggage and customs are both speedy and efficient. If ground transportation passes are not included in your travel package, there is a booth just outside customs for a transportation ticket. Airport vans are used for transfer to your hotel. If you are planning to rent a car or scooter on the island, you

will need to bring your driver's license. The new peso, at press time, is 8.45 pesos to one U.S. dollar. Banks, hotel and gift shops all change dollars at slight variations in rate. Prices on Cozumel are generally moderate and reasonable. A \$12 U.S. departure tax is paid when you leave the country.

THINGS TO DO ON COZUMEL

The island's rural-town atmosphere belies the fact that Cozumel's shopping, restaurants and party life are among the very best of any popular dive destination. There are currently more than 100 restaurants and more than 200 gift shops. Your hotelier or dive operator can make recommendations of those most worth your attention. Shopping offers the standard souvenirs, such as T-shirts and tropical items, as well as Mexican blankets, ceramics, silver, jewelry, wood crafts, clothing, paintings, sculpture, furniture and more. Hotel related activities can be centered around alternative watersports, rest and relaxation and various island tours. There is a very nice museum in San Miguel with professional displays that depict the island's natural assets, history and cultural heritage. There are several small Maya sites to visit, the most extensive being San Gervasio approximately in the middle of the island just off the cross-island road. The opposite, windward side of Cozumel presents some beautiful, nearly deserted beaches and wilderness settings.

THINGS TO DO OFF ISLAND

The Cozumel Ferry, actually a series of 90 to 110 foot passenger vessels that leave from the main dock in town, cross from Cozumel to the mainland all day, leaving every half hour. Playa del Carmen is the landing on the Yucatan—a town only slightly smaller than San Miguel in size and shops. The coastal road takes you toward Cancun, about a 40 minute drive away. The road south takes you to Xelha Lagoon and the Maya sites of Tulum, on the Caribbean, and Coba, in the jungled interior. All of this can be packaged for you in a day tour from your hotel travel desk. Also available is a land or air tour to the magnificent major Maya site of Chichen Itza on the mainland. 🐠

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TEXT AND PHOTOGRAPHY
BY BILL GLEASON AND STEPHEN FRINK

The story of Bonaire and just about any resort on it revolves around the underwater world. Indeed, how this small island managed not only to compete with larger islands but establish itself as the fifth most popular diving area in the world (Source: SDM 1996 Subscriber Survey) for visitors leaving the United States, is a testament to both the quality of the diving and the unpretentious style and charm of the island and its 12,000 residents.

If we take for granted lush reefs, plentiful marine life and competent dive operators, Bonaire, of course, has two things going for it that almost no other diving island has:

GOOD WEATHER: In the last five years, only two diving days have been sacrificed to the weather! Think of it—out of the last 1,827 days, Bonaire was unable to put divers in the water on only two. Talk about a guaranteed diving vacation!

CALM, CURRENT FREE SEAS: There is an almost complete absence of current or rough water conditions, making the island perfect for all levels of divers, novice through expert U/W photographer!

It's no surprise Bonaire developed such a reputation for diving excellence. However, its fame as a diving paradise has a downside; the word got out that while diving on Bonaire was, indeed, all it was cracked up to be, that was the only thing a visitor could do there. All that has changed in the last couple of years; today there is an expanding list of activities for both divers and nondivers of all ages. And, it has all been accomplished without sacrificing Bonaire's quintessential laid-back style.

The Sand Dollar Condominium Resort and Sand Dollar Dive and Photo lead the way on the island in delivering different activities for guests. Start with the condos themselves. Managed more like a



Above: Adjacent to the dive area is the famous Green Parrot Restaurant. Below: SSI Platinum Pro staff members: Alvin, Jeremy, Leonel, Jopie, Andre and Nolly.



Sand Dollar provides a fleet of custom designed dive boats (Sand Diver I above) and flexible schedules for its guests.



hotel (with maid service, front office and the like) these modern units all face the sea and range in size from studio to three bedroom. All are complete with kitchen and all are just a quick walk from the Dive/Photo Center, the hub of all activity. In addition, there's a perfect restaurant called the Green Parrot, right on the water, as well as a small grocery and ice cream shop on the road as you enter the property. You don't ever have to leave Sand Dollar if you don't want to. Besides the overall quality of the place, you hear the same comment again and again, "Everything, from the rooms to front office, to the Green Parrot, works!"

The dive center is a well organized and laid out operation that consists of retail store, gear rental and repair area, large classroom, gear storage (30 yards from the boat dock), five custom dive boats

and a well equipped and staffed photo shop. Anything you want, from a snorkel holder to quick regulator or camera repairs, is right at your fingertips. The schedule boards for the boats are right there, too. Sand Dollar, like many resorts on Bonaire, uses the popular "sign up system" so you can choose from any of 14 different boat departures and sites every day! In addition, the shore diving right in front of Sand Dollar is excellent, so just grab a tank, hop off the dock and you're just a two minute swim from the drop-off. There's also a sandy terrace between the resort and the drop-off, a perfect natural teaching area for a full range of courses.

Its staff sets Sand Dollar apart from nearly all resorts in the Caribbean. As you pass the classroom, you'll see intro courses being taught as well as basic and

world and, perhaps, the top five! It provides diving guests with a guaranteed high level of service but that's what you expect when you plunk down a credit card for a diving vacation. And, it's what we've come to expect from Bonaire, as well. But what do nondivers (as families grow, an increasingly important aspect of any vacation) do? And what do divers do when they're not diving?

Previously, nondiving activities were limited to island tours (not bad but this is not a big place), going out to dinner in Kralendijk (good news—besides those in hotels, there are now more than 40 different restaurants to choose from, many quite good) or going to Washington Park (the nature preserve that covers the entire northern third of the island). Not so anymore. While these activities are still available, take a look at the rundown of things to do at Sand Dollar:

GUIDED SNORKELING: In April, 1996, Sand Dollar kicked off its Bonaire Guided Snorkeling Program and offers visitors daily guided snorkeling trips. The trip is a combination of a one-half hour slide show (12 different shows) and a boat trip to the sites described in it. You get to learn about the reef before you ever get there. Try Fish I.D., The Coral Reef, Corals and Intro to Marine Invertebrates. Feeling adventurous? Try night snorkeling under the careful supervision of specially trained Bonaire snorkel guides. And, both divers and snorkelers should try a trip to the mangroves and explore an integral part of Bonaire's marine ecosystem.

While the Guided Snorkeling Program is open to folks of all ages, members of the ten and under set might prefer Sand Dollar's Sand Penny Club, where supervised pool, snorkeling and crafts are also conducted on a daily basis. Most of these activities are timed so mom and dad can sneak away for a boat dive during the morning; perhaps joining the kids on a guided snorkel in the afternoon!

GUIDED BIKING: You can have a mountain bike delivered and take part in a Guided Biking tour. There's now a trail on the northern side of the island and tours are arranged for the skill and stamina of the riders. You can ride hard or just tour, depending on your preference.

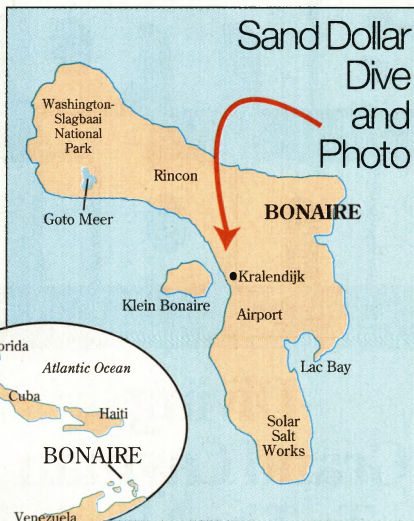
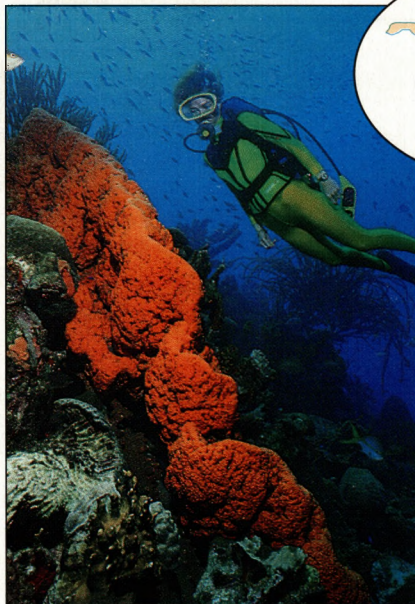
KAYAKING: You also might want to grab a kayak and explore parts of the island that can't be reached by any other means. Free introductions to the kayaks are offered at Sand Dollar. Since these kayaks are specifically designed for ocean touring, you'll find them stable and easy to maneuver after just one try!

NATURE WALKS AND MORE: There's also a resident naturalist on site at Sand Dollar who conducts nature walks, snorkeling trips and birdwatching tours. Don't knock it till you've tried it. Finding

(Continued on Page 158)



Above: The Sand Penny Club, Sand Dollar's children's program, offers a variety of snorkeling and topside activities.

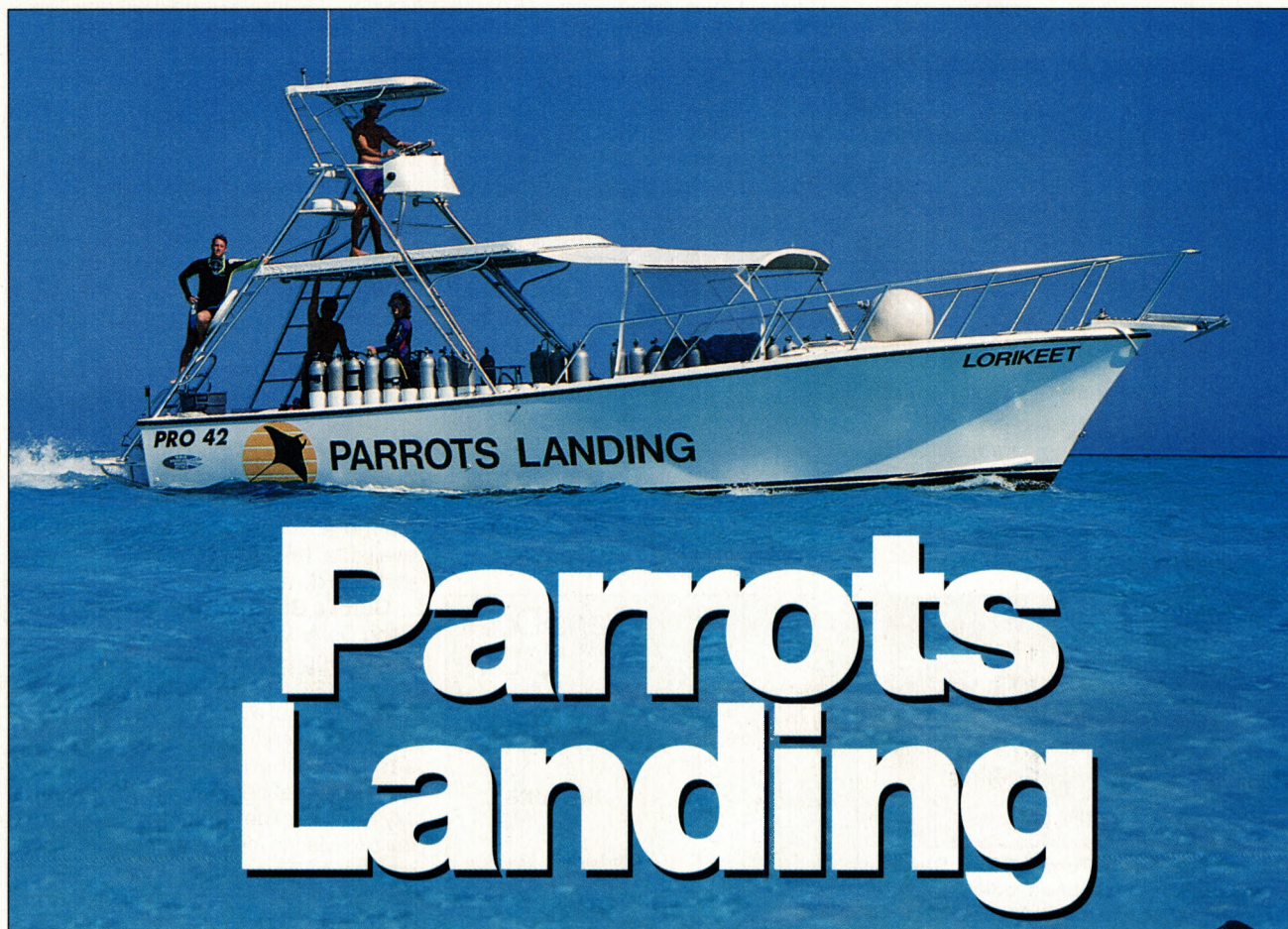


Left: A diver hovers over an Orange Elephant Ear Sponge, one of the more colorful sights on Bonaire's lush reefs. Below left: Free buoyancy control workshops are offered to all guests; photo buoyancy, too.

advanced photo courses and a full range of specialties. These are usually small classes, with just a few participants, and you get all the personal attention you require. Sand Dollar is also unique in that it can boast six full-time SSI Platinum Pros on its staff. This lifetime recognition award is given to diving professionals by Scuba Schools International (SSI), a leading certification agency. The requirements: 5,000 or more lifetime dives. Talk about experience! Congratulations to Sand Dollar's SSI Pros: Alvin Clemencia, Nolly Thode, Andre Nahr, Leonel Martijn, Jopie Domacasse and Jeremy Jansen. You will usually look for Andre (owner) and Leonel (manager) topside, you'll find Jeremy, Alvin, Nolly and Jopie on your boats and teaching every day!

Sand Dollar Dive and Photo is easily one of the top ten dive resorts in the





Parrots Landing



Above: A diver tries to keep pace with a normally reclusive Hawksbill Turtle in the warm, clear water near Big Tunnels.

Diving Grand Cayman To The Max!

**TEXT AND PHOTOGRAPHY
BY WALT STEARNS**

When Parrots Landing came up with its Cayman to the Max package in 1995, I thought surely the poor souls in the accounting and marketing departments had burst their overpressure relief discs. After all, offering an inexpensive vacation package that includes every Parrots Landing dive option (they are numerous) sounds crazy! But then again, that is what Parrots Landing is all about. And, if you didn't take advantage of that package last year, guess what? It's back!

Rapidly becoming a Parrots Landing signature, Cayman to the Max appeals to hardcore divers. This year, the program will begin September 5, running through December 15 (with the exception of Pirates Week, October 25 to 31, and Thanksgiving, November 25 to 30).

The Max plan is based on a choice of



Above: Interacting with tame Southern Stingrays at Sandbar is one of the most exhilarating and unique experiences in diving.

packages, ranging from a short, three night option to a seven night arrangement. Included is round trip airfare from Miami, all ground transfers, your choice of accommodations (hotel taxes and gratuities are included) at either Coconut Harbour, Seaview Hotel (right next door to Parrots Landing) or the Sleep Inn (between Seven Mile Beach and George Town) and, of course, the most important element in a dive vacation, the diving. If you enjoy diving as much as I do, this is where it gets interesting.

Following arrival on Grand Cayman and check-in at your hotel, your diving will begin at 1:00 pm with a two tank double shallow boat dive on the West Wall or, if you prefer, a shore dive at Coconut Harbour, the Seaview Hotel or Parrots Landing headquarters.

Parrots Landing is known for offering one of the most progressive dive programs on the island, Parrot's Pick. Besides the morning two tank wall/reef dives on West and North Wall offered by most Grand Cayman operations, Parrots Pick includes a two tank afternoon, double shallow boat dive on the West Wall; an afternoon one tank Stingray City trip; and a one tank boat night dive (Tuesdays and Fridays). Its large fleet of dive boats (eight) allows Parrots Landing to offer trips that meet the needs of a variety of divers, from novice to advanced.

For the more experienced, another

Parrots Pick offering is the Advanced Boat program. This includes a dedicated vessel reserved for divers who use computers to maximize bottom times on two and three multi-level dives. This program also allows more latitude for exploring a given site.

In a typical two tank, morning Advanced Boat option, guests might start off on a site of their choice, such as **Big Tunnels**. Afterward, the group can either move to another location, such as **Orange Canyon** for the second wall dive or stay right where they are. The primary aim of the two tank Advanced Boat is to provide two morning deep dives on either the West or South Walls (the group makes the choice).

For even greater range, the three tank excursion in the Advanced Boat program, offered every Friday and Sunday (also available for group charters), gives guests the option of two wall/deep dives and a third shallow dive. Nearly an all day affair, the trip can include both a North and West Wall combination or a West and South Wall selection (weather permitting). In addition to three great dives on your own choice of sites, you'll be served a tasty lunch.

The only stipulation to the Advanced Boat program is that you act in a responsible manner, not exceeding the Cayman Islands Watersports Operators Association's prescribed maximum depth of

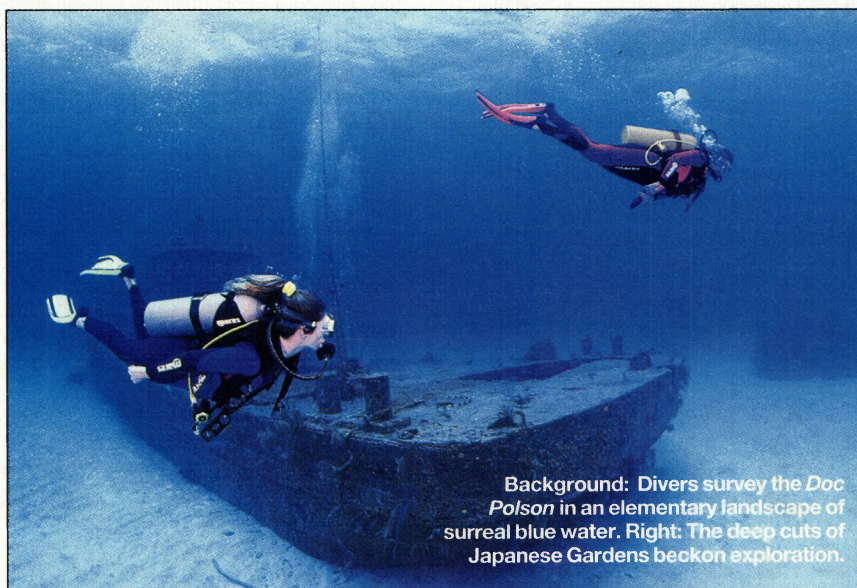
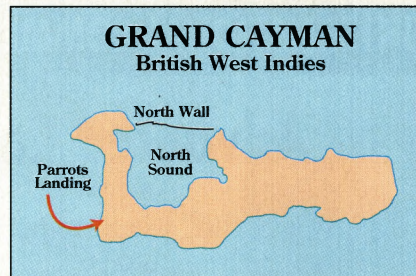
110 feet and not going into decompression and/or doing sawtooth profiles. In addition, participants must have a dive computer and understand its use. For those needing a computer, Parrots Landing carries several computers in its rental program, which also includes an orientation.

Under normal arrangements the upgrade fees for both options typically run \$5 for the two tank and \$39 for the three tank trip. However, for divers in the Cayman to the Max package, the Advanced Boat option is even sweeter. Parrots Landing has dropped the \$5 upgrade fee for the two tank option and made the fee for the three tank option a mere \$15. If you're into quality diving, what's \$15, particularly if you are planning on eating lunch on the water?

With the Cayman to the Max program, guests are encouraged to take full advantage of any and all parts of Parrots Pick. For example, a one day itinerary could start off with a morning wall/reef trip to North Wall, hitting such sites as **Tarpon Alley**, **Eagle Ray Pass** or **Lemon Drop-off** and finishing with a shallower dive such as the top portion of **Gail's Mountain** or **Lemon Reef**. At 1:00 pm, the menu shifts to a two tank double shallow trip to the West Wall, hitting choice spots such as **Bonnie's Arch**, the **Doc Polson** or **Aquarium**. For those with the fortitude and bottom



Parrots Landing headquarters provides both a boat docking area and easy shore diving.



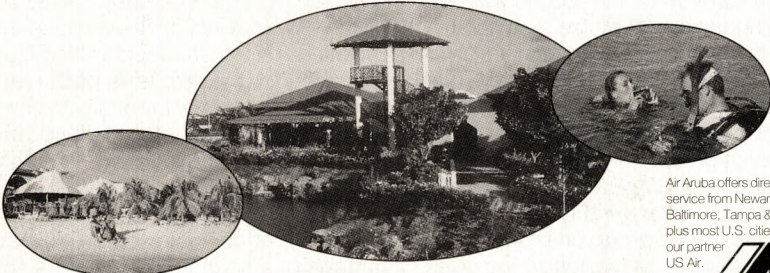
Background: Divers survey the **Doc Polson** in an elementary landscape of surreal blue water. Right: The deep cuts of Japanese Gardens beckon exploration.



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PARROTS LANDING

time, a night dive at **Armchair Reef** or the **Balboa Wreck** could wrap up the day nicely. On day two (minus the night boat dive) do it all over again or take part in the three tank Advanced Boat program. If that still isn't enough, Parrots Landing provides free use of its tanks for shore diving, day or night. Essentially, you can dive, dive, dive until your fins fall off!

Besides the usual amenities, such as plenty of fresh drinking water, a freshwater camera rinse tank, marine head (on the larger boats), freshwater shower and orange slices after the dive, the staff's good nature adds to the casual ambience, which amounts to a custom made diving experience.

With this in mind, late risers be warned. Parrots Landing prefers to get a jump on the competition for the choicer spots on the walls by leaving the dock early; 8:00 am from Parrots Landing and 8:30 am from Governor's Harbour. While some might consider this an "ungodly" hour, it provides a significant benefit for underwater photographers and fishwatchers. Namely, catching some of the reef's more reclusive creatures, such as sea turtles and sleeping Nurse Sharks, before they leave the scene to avoid divers.

The seven night package, which offers six days of diving, can add up to a whopping 26 dives. That's a lot diving! Especially when it costs just \$925 (only \$26 more than last year). A typical one week package elsewhere, for roughly the same price, may only consist of accommodations, a daily two tank morning boat dive and perhaps, air fare.

If a seven day trip is too long for you, opt for the shorter four day/three night version, with two full diving days—this encompasses Parrots Pick, airfare, accommodations and diving for \$525. With this option you can rack up eight to nine (including one night) boat dives.

Making an afternoon visit to **Stingray City** or **Sandbar** is a logical choice if you're scheduled to fly home the next morning or early afternoon. Besides being only 12 feet deep, these two sites are among the only places on earth where divers can interact with unusually tame Southern Stingrays. Presently, there are an estimated 100 plus rays roaming the sites stretching from Stingray City to Sandbar, including **Amazing Rays** and **Stingray Alley** in between.

Accommodations are based on double occupancy, with the Coconut Harbour option only available with the seven night package. Both Coconut Harbour and the Seaview Hotel have shore diving on the premises.

(Continued on Page 131)

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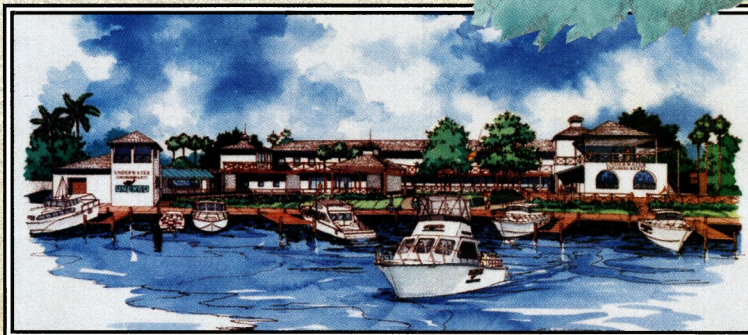
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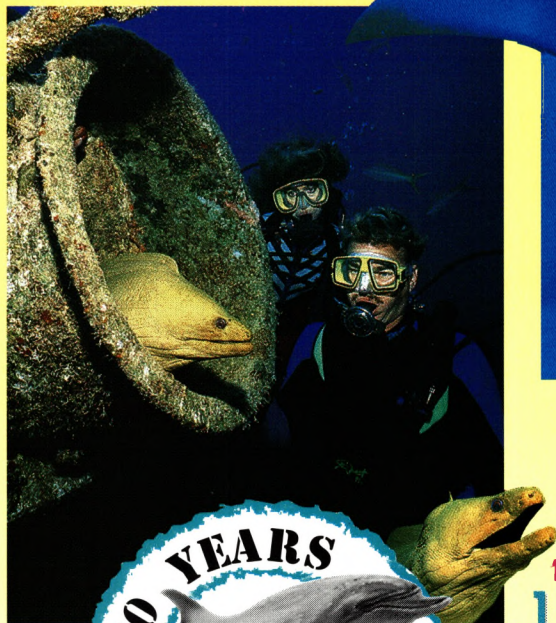
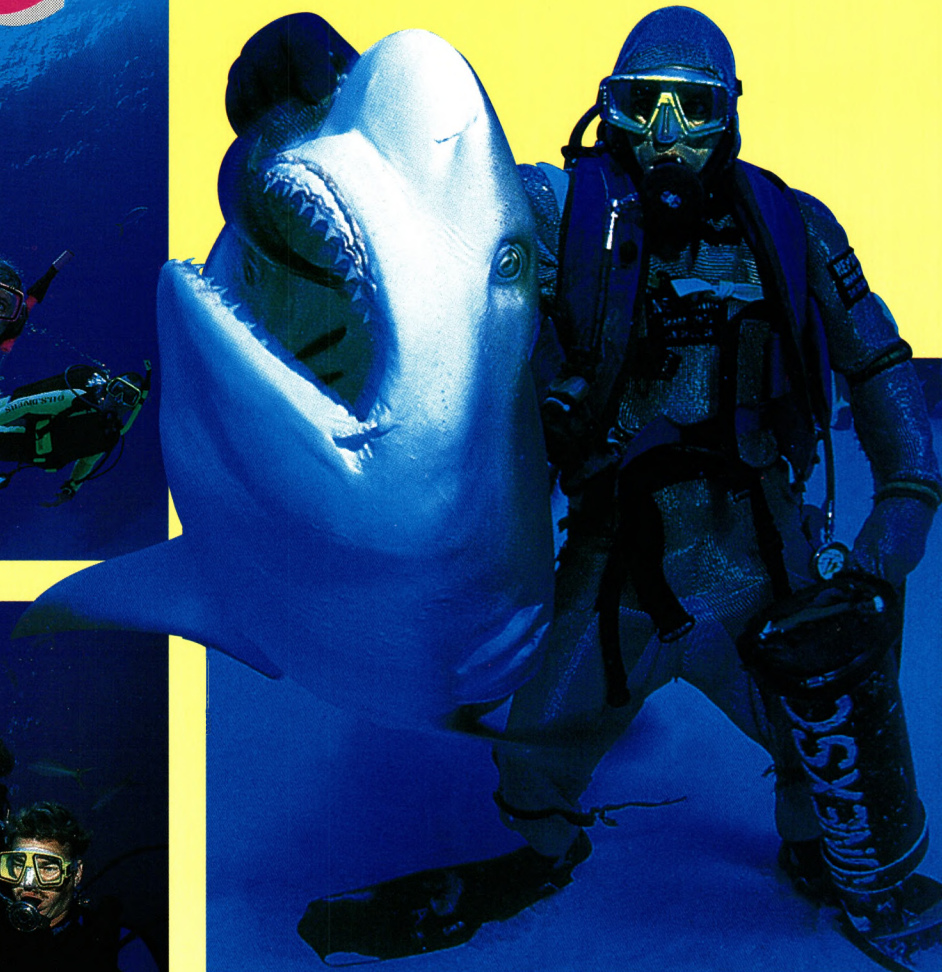
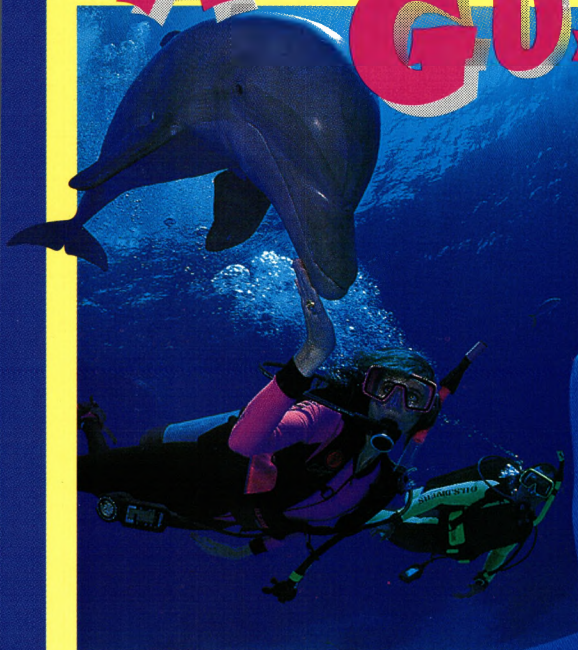
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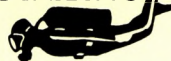
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PARROTS LANDING

(Continued from Page 130)

If, however, more modern creature comforts are a concern, such as having color TV with HBO and CNN, the Sleep Inn would be the better choice. Just north of George Town, a short walking distance to both downtown and lower Seven Mile Beach, the Sleep Inn's 115 room complex is handsomely appointed with comfortable, modern amenities. Divided among three grades—standard, superior and junior suite, all feature wall to wall carpeting, queen sized beds, large shower stalls, telephone with voice message systems, large screen televisions with built-in alarm clocks/radios and really cold air-conditioning.

A franchise of Choice Hotels International (Comfort, Quality & Clarion Inn chain), the Sleep Inn incorporates a highly modern, computerized security system, using magnetized key cards for each room door. For added safety, each room features a mini lockbox for storing personal effects. Suites include a sitting area with a sleeper sofa and desk, as well as a small refrigerator/freezer and microwave oven. There is an additional charge for a superior suite, whether or not it is part of the Cayman to the Max package.

Outside, Sleep Inn's two story building wraps around a tropical landscaped courtyard, with a large swimming pool, sundeck and heated hottub. The courtyard also features an outdoor bar and grill with open air seating beneath large blue and white umbrellas. To help guests jump start the day, Sleep Inn provides fresh coffee and hot chocolate, along with raisin or cinnamon bread and/or doughnuts, free of charge in the lobby area, beginning around 6:30 am.

Round trip airfare for the Cayman to the Max program is based on a Monday through Friday departure and return from



Miami via Cayman Airways. In addition to providing three daily departures from Miami, Cayman Airways also offers several direct flights from Atlanta, Houston, Tampa and Orlando every Monday, Wednesday and Friday. The Max package also covers these gateway cities for an additional charge of \$35 for departures from both Tampa and Orlando and \$135 from Houston and Atlanta. There is an additional fee applied to weekend departures and/or returns as well. Even so,

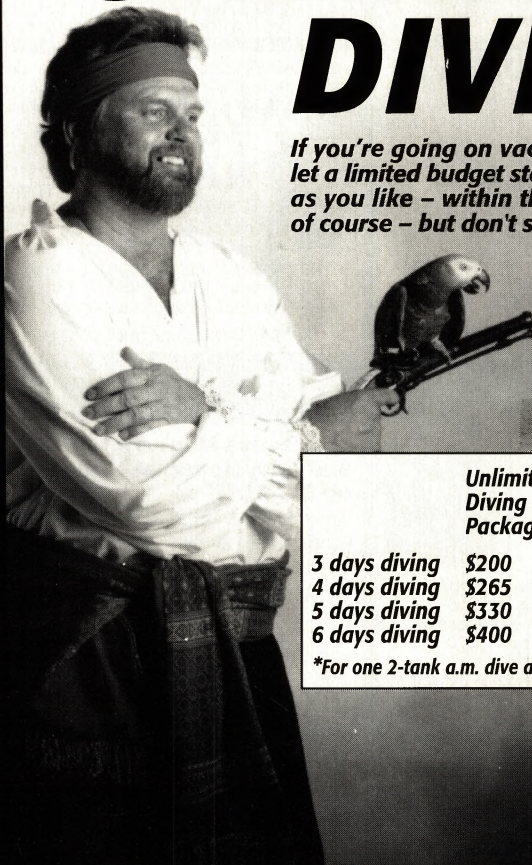


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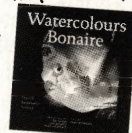


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Parrots Landing reservations center can be reached by calling (800) 448-0428 or (809) 949-0294; fax (809) 949-0294. 📞

MARTY SNYDERMAN AND TOM CAMPBELL AT DIVE SOUTH OCEAN

Emmy award winning photographer and cinematographer Marty Snyderman and award winning photographer Tom Campbell will be hosting four separate one week photography and videography classes at Stuart Cove's Dive South Ocean during June 1996.

Each one week class will offer instruction for both photographers and videographers. The schedule includes classroom presentations, shooting tips from Marty and Tom during your dives and post dive reviews of the day's shots. The week long class will begin with basic skills, with each day building upon the previous day's experiences.

The week culminates with two days of Stuart Cove's Shark Adventure dives. On shark diving days students will study the sharks in both their natural environment and during action packed feeding dives; specially trained feeders will help position the sharks in front of the camera lens.

Space is limited to 30 students per week. Classes will receive dedicated boats to ensure photographic needs will be met.

Fin Photo, Nassau's first full service underwater photography and video service center, will host the programs. On the Dive South Ocean property, Fin Photo offers exclusive service to Dive South Ocean's guests, including twice daily E-6 film processing, Cibachrome prints, light tables for previewing the day's work and charging stations. Videographers can preview the day's shots, use an edit suite to polish Hi-8 tapes and make VHS dubs.

The four, one week classes will be June 1 to 8, June 8 to 15, June 15 to 22 and June 22 to 29. Packages include six days of diving, seven nights' single or double accommodations, continental breakfast each day and six lunches. Call Stuart Cove's at (800) 879-9832 for reservations, additional information or to request a brochure. 📞

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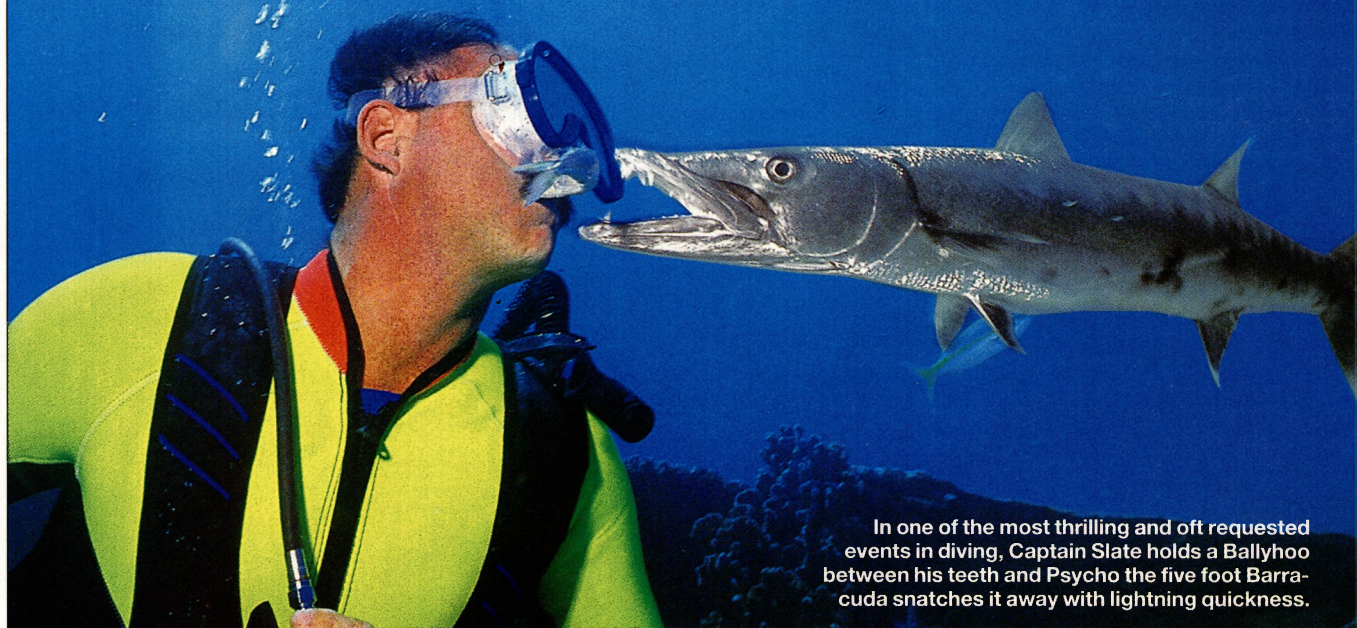
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Captain Slate's Atlantis Dive Center

YMCA Instructor Training at a Key Largo Favorite



In one of the most thrilling and oft requested events in diving, Captain Slate holds a Ballyhoo between his teeth and Psycho the five foot Barracuda snatches it away with lightning quickness.

TEXT AND PHOTOGRAPHY BY STEPHEN FRINK

Divers enroll in instructor certification programs for a number of reasons. Some may wish to improve their own proficiency and knowledge. Some may wish to teach now and then as independent instructors using a neighbor's pool. Some may do it simply for ego gratification. And then there are those who see a serious, fulltime career evolving from greater immersion in the dive industry. For those more motivated individuals, instructor certification via the Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA) is an excellent choice.

There are 1,700 YMCAs scattered throughout the United States, each of which requires its scuba instructors to be certified through a YMCA program. This is a huge pool of potential employment opportunity, especially for those who feel more comfortable living in the U.S. rather than relocating to a foreign country. While the demand for YMCA instructors continues to rise, there remains but one fulltime YMCA instructor college in the United States, fortuitously in the dive Mecca of Key Largo, Florida. Only at Captain Slate's Atlantis Dive Center can instructor candidates lay the foundation for their future career in a tropical paradise within the context of a busy dive re-

sort. And, since Captain Spencer Slate has been the National Chairman of the YMCA scuba programs for the past 14 years, candidates can be assured of a top quality education and the best possible job placement following graduation.

Captain Slate has become a colorful icon of the dive industry. He has been pictured larger than life on the covers of dive magazines holding a Ballyhoo between his clenched teeth while a fearsome Barracuda swoops by just inches away (see SKIN DIVER Magazine, March 1995). But, beneath that flamboyant exterior is a responsible businessman who is president of the local Chamber of Commerce and an experienced dive operator who has brought Atlantis Dive Center from a small shop with a single six passenger boat in 1978 to its present status as one of the largest charter dive operations in the country. For potential YMCA instructors, graduating from Captain Slate's Atlantis Dive Center Instructor Institute of Key Largo means both credibility and prestige.

Instruction has always been a big part of what Atlantis offered the recreational scuba diver. With certification programs in place featuring YMCA, PADI, NAUI, NASDS, NASE, IANTD, ACUC, DAN and

CMAS, Atlantis is a veritable alphabet of expertise. In any of these disciplines, instruction is available from a basic level through specialties and all the way to assistant instructor. Specialties are especially popular and include wreck, boat and night diving, YMCA nitrox diver, search and recovery specialist, equipment specialist, underwater photography and reef fish identification. At the instructor level, the YMCA program features two complete institutes per month, with classes guaranteed. That means if you call Slate and need to take a YMCA instructor class in October, no problem. You can be enrolled even in the unlikely event you are the only student. Classes do tend to be small, however, so the level of personalized attention is very high and placement is pursued very aggressively.

There are three basic phases to the YMCA instructor program. In Phase One, which takes three days, students take the SLAM (Scuba Lifesaving Accident Management) course, the prerequisite for all leadership courses. For those entering the YMCA program from other certifying agencies, the SLAM crossover is a one day course. In Phase Two, an additional three day course confers assistant instructor status. These two modules can

be completed either directly preceding the instructor course or taken separately as the schedule allows. Of course, the grand finale is Phase Three, the instructor course. Candidates arriving with at least 50 logged dives, 15 hours of lecture experience, 18 hours of in-water teaching experience, having assisted with three complete checkout dives and having prepared both classroom and pool teaching outlines (these will have occurred during Phase Two) can then become YMCA instructors in as little as four days. To learn more about the program, call (800) 331-DIVE and ask for course director Skip Dawson. Skip is an enthusiastic diver with more than 600 dives logged on the U.S. Coast Guard cutter *Duane* and he'd love to chat with you about the YMCA programs or provide general details about Key Largo diving.

Despite its burgeoning popularity among YMCA instructor candidates, Captain Slate's Atlantis Dive Center is most famous as a resort dive operation.



Above: Captain Slate's A-frame welcome center at Mile Marker 106. Below: The Howard Johnson Key Largo Resort.



Slate has worked long and hard to build his operation beyond its humble beginnings, adding more and better boats and dive infrastructure along the way. The small six pack boat is long gone, replaced by three 42 foot diesel custom dive boats and a single 28 footer. All are equipped with walk-through transoms, oversized dive platforms with extended ladders, tank racks, camera rinses and full safety equipment. One of the boats, the *Coral Princess VI*, even has glassbottom viewing ports. The addition of the *Wreck Diver* (a 28 foot Commercial Work Boat) to the fleet allows Slate to guarantee trips to as few as two divers and offer economical boat charters to small groups.

The air delivery system is likewise impressive. A pair of compressors, 75 and 30 cubic feet per minute, pump air to a 40,000 cubic foot bank of compressed air storage bottles. Nitrox fill capability is



The queen of Key Largo's shipwreck fleet, the 327 foot U.S. Coast Guard cutter *Duane* provides sensational photo opportunities.



Above: Captain Slate's main shop is conveniently near the north end of Key Largo's National Marine Sanctuary for quick, easy access to superb diving adventures.

SIMPLY DEPENDABLE

"I have always said that it could never happen to me."



To Whom it May Concern:

I always said it could never happen to me. Well, it did. I ran out of air at 75'. During the surface interval I swapped tanks. When I turned on the valve, my hoses pressurized, leading me to believe I had a full tank of air. My greatest mistake was

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available and the storage for all tanks is just a few feet from the dive boats. Not that it matters to the divers on Slate's boats, they never have to carry their tanks anyway. Two tanks will be waiting for them on board; the Atlantis crew is also responsible for unloading and filling the tanks for the next day's charter.

Captain Slate's Atlantis Dive Center operates two dive shops in Key Largo; an A-frame welcome center on U.S. 1 at Mile Marker 106 and the main shop directly on a canal near the north end of the Key Largo National Marine Sanctuary. The 2,000 square foot main shop houses the executive offices with the newly remodeled classroom upstairs. The ground floor contains the retail areas, compressors, tank storage, rental gear and myriad other things necessary to keep a busy dive shop humming at peak efficiency. The boats dock about 15 yards from the rear door of the shop and there is ample parking around the front of the building and in the lots next door. Underwater photo services are in conjunction with Stephen Frink Photographic and include daily E-6 film processing, camera and video rentals, custom videos and photo instruction.

Atlantis Dive Center packages are with the Howard Johnson Key Largo Resort. This 100 room complex has long been a favorite with traveling divers for its ideal location in the heart of Key Largo, directly on Florida Bay and the sunset side of the island. General manager Itzik Laron is proud to count divers among his valued clients and does his best to accommodate their special needs with ground floor rooms upon request. The resort features newly renovated rooms, a freshwater swimming pool, outdoor barbecue facilities and a restaurant and bar. In addition to price incentives, both diving and lodging are booked; the Atlantis/Howard Johnson package features a popular Unlimited Dive Option. For just an additional \$20 per day, divers can book all of the available boat trips from Atlantis. This means up to four dives per day at four different locations, plus night dives (night dives can be booked at any time at the request of as few as two divers).

The most popular dive at Atlantis Dive Center happens each Friday morning as Captain Slate accompanies his guests to the historic shipwreck of the **City of Washington**. There, amid the scattered deckplates that have rested here since this coastal freighter ran aground in 1917, Captain Slate gently settles to the bottom while divers watch in rapt attention. Nearly as soon as he alights a five foot Barracuda darts to the scene. With his eyes never leaving the razor teeth of this

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awesome predator, Slate carefully picks a Ballyhoo from a mesh bait bag, drops his regulator and sticks the beak between his clenched teeth. As fast as lightning a Barracuda, appropriately named Psycho, races in to grab the bait. Normally it is an uneventful feeding, big on adrenaline and drama but short on blood and mayhem. But occasionally it gets a little hairy, especially when the two resident six foot Green Morays emerge to compete for the bait. Then it becomes a frenzy of swirling critters and flashing teeth. Slate bears the scars of this interaction on his hands and facemasks but fortunately he's managed to keep his nose and lips intact. It's a stunning still photo opportunity—even better, perhaps, on video. Videographers are invited to shoot their own footage or staff photo specialists are on hand to create a professional video souvenir of the dive, complete with titles and soundtrack.

Captain Slate specializes in diving the best of the Key Largo National Marine Sanctuary. The sites most easily accessed from his location at the north end of the island include the oft-requested **Christ of the Abyss** statue and **The Elbow**. The Christ statue sits in just 25 feet of water surrounded by a vibrant coral reef. The 11 foot tall bronze statue represents Christ with arms upraised as if

CAPTAIN SLATE POSTER NOW AVAILABLE

Owing to popular demand from divers who have seen Captain Slate perform his popular fish feeding antics, including feeding Barracuda and giant Green Moray Eels by holding fish in his mouth, a beautiful new poster is now available. Featuring impressive photographs by famed U/W photographer Stephen Frink, this limited edition 18 by 24 inch poster, signed by Captain Spencer Slate, is available for just \$7.95 (including shipping and handling). To order, call (800) 331-3483.

beckoning divers and snorkelers to behold the beauty of the sea. While the statue is the star of this dive, the giant Brain Coral just to the north and the acres of lovely Elkhorn Coral to the east bear exploration. At The Elbow, the clear waters of the Gulf Stream wash along several historic shipwrecks that shelter huge populations of reef tropicals.

A little farther to the south is the wreck of the **Benwood**. During World War II the **Benwood** was running offshore with her lights blacked out to avoid attracting the attention of patrolling German U-boats. She collided with another freighter running without lights and the captain got as far as the 35 foot depth contour before he could go no farther. Much of the superstructure was later blown apart to avoid being a hazard to navigation but the broad expanse of

(Continued on Page 158)

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Testimonial

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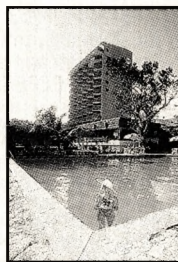


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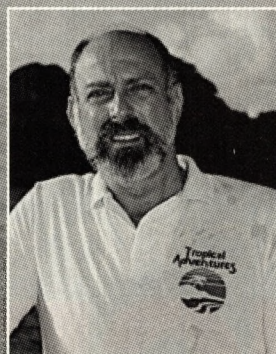
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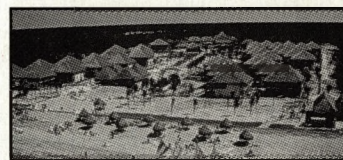
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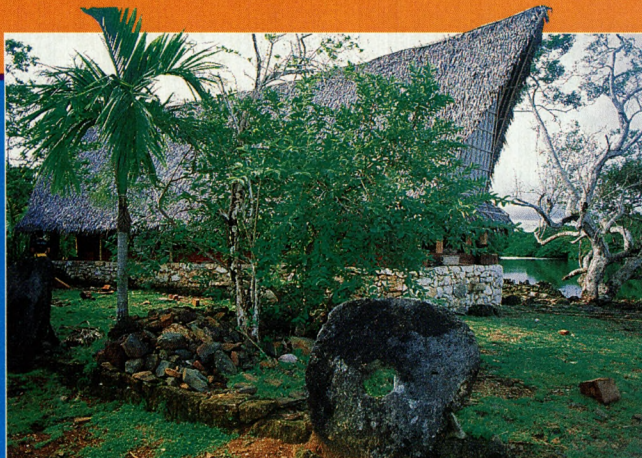
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Mastigias jellyfish are the unique inhabitants of Jellyfish Lake in Palau. Right: Stone money, Yap.



THE PACIFIC'S MARINE WONDERLAND

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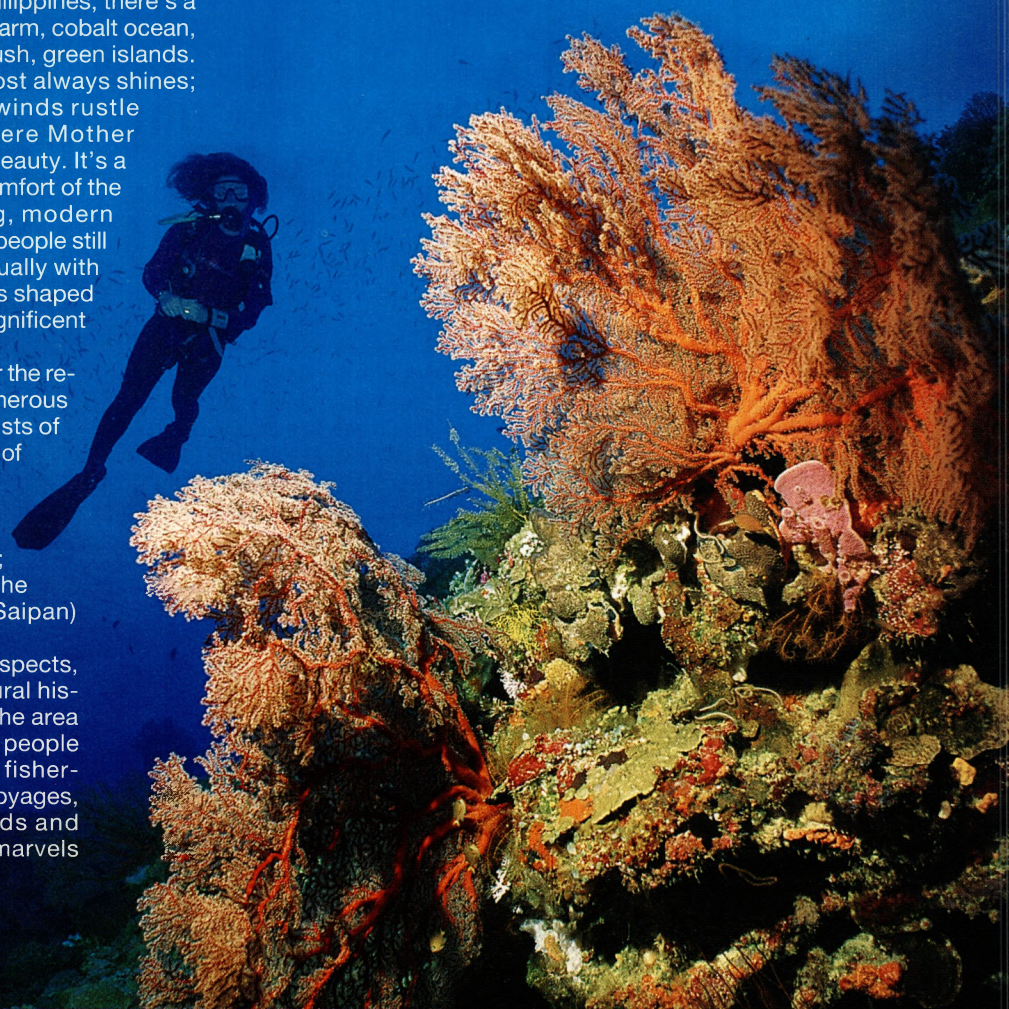
TEXT AND PHOTOGRAPHY BY AL HORNSBY

Nearly 6,000 miles west of Los Angeles, roughly between Hawaii and the Philippines, there's a 3,000,000 square mile area of warm, cobalt ocean, dotted with several thousand lush, green islands. It's a place where the sun almost always shines; where warm, tropical trade winds rustle through coconut palms; where Mother Nature has created abundant beauty. It's a place where the serenity and comfort of the old ways still keep a bustling, modern world at bay; a place where the people still smile and live connected spiritually with the marine environment that has shaped their lives and culture. It's a magnificent place known as Micronesia.

An oceanic region named after the related peoples who live in its numerous island groups, Micronesia consists of several chief areas: the Republic of Palau; the Federated States of Micronesia (the island groups of Yap, Chuuk, Pohnpei, Kosrae and other smaller islands); Guam; the Commonwealth of the Northern Marianas (Rota and Saipan) and the Marshalls.

Despite each area's unique aspects, the entire region shares a cultural history. Known to have inhabited the area since 1500 BC, the Micronesia people have always been sailors and fishermen whose long range canoe voyages, using only the stars, the winds and currents, are still considered marvels

Palau's Ngerchong Corner, a sloping reef beginning in 40 feet, supports a lush coral garden with beautiful orange seafans.





Green Sea Turtles glide over sunlit white sand at German Channel.

Myriad corals and a large crinoid carpet a sloping reef off Palau.



of oceanic navigation.

Even with their remote location, the islands have been affected by the changes of history. Discovered by Magellan in the 16th century, they were under Spanish rule until the beginning of the 20th century, when they were purchased by Germany. World War I saw them taken over by the Japanese, who ruled until the rampage of World War II rolled through the region and put them under U.S. supervision as a Trust Territory until the last decade. Guam remains a U.S. territory, all the other islands have formed new, independent governments of their own. However, they all speak English, use U.S. currency and have U.S. electrical systems.

Through it all Micronesia has retained its distinct cultural integrity. The old songs, dances and ways of life are still found and, on most of the islands, fishing and farming are still the foundations for local economies.

Despite its location, Micronesia is surprisingly accessible to modern travelers. The well-maintained air travel system provided by Continental Micronesia, with its hub in Guam, serves the various island groups,



which can be reached on a daily basis less than eight hours from Hawaii. For the adventurous—and something every true Micronesia aficionado must do at least once—

there is the Hawaii-Majuro-Kwajalein-Kosrae-Pohnpei-Chuuk-Guam island hopper flight, also operated by Continental Micronesia.

With all there is to offer the visitor—beautiful beaches, fishing, World War II history, nightlife in Saipan and Guam—the strongest allure of this

Top: Truk Lagoon's *Shinkoku Maru* has been transformed into a thriving garden of hard and soft corals in 45 feet of water. Above: A Reef Bannerfish (*Heniochus acuminatus*) among the soft corals.

lovely area has been discovered only within the last 20 years by divers. Micronesia is truly one of the wonders of the undersea world.

In an especially warm and bountiful realm of the Pacific, near where life is thought to have first originated in the ocean, Micronesia is blessed with an incredible richness and diversity of marine life. Majestic walls, spectacular reefs and channels that come alive during tidal flows provide divers with un-



Diving Micronesia provides the opportunity to observe the unique behavior of Manta Rays. Left: The Micronesian people are proud to display their cultural heritage to visitors.



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derwater settings rivaling those found anywhere in the world—all in wonderfully clear, warm (84°F average) Pacific waters.

GUAM, ROTA AND SAIPAN

Guam, the gateway to Micronesia, is often bypassed by divers on their way to the more famous destinations. However, Guam has much to offer of its own, with dives at such places as the **Blue Hole**, **Double Reef** and the wrecks of the **Tokai Maru** and the **Cormoran**. Excellent dive operators, including Micronesia Divers Association and Guam Tropical Dive Station, can take divers to any of Guam's best sites.

Rota, a short hop from Guam, is a sparsely populated, mountainous island just beginning to be explored by divers. Dive Rota is offering dive tours and discovering new sites. With incredibly clear water, wall dives, a great wreck dive and a beautiful cave grotto, Rota promises to become a recognized destination.

A bit farther to the northeast from Rota, Saipan is a popular Japanese tourist destination with great resorts and nightlife. Because of its World War II history, it has a large collection of artifacts, both underwater and topside. All American Divers, a Saipan dive operator catering to American guests, can show visitors not only the famous **Blue Grotto** but also submerged ships, planes and tanks, all left over from the fierce battles that occurred in the recapture of Saipan.

PALAU

The islands of Palau provide an incredible, varied dive experience in a truly remarkable natural setting. Consisting of some 300 islands scattered throughout an elongated, nearly 100 mile long lagoon, the entire area is something straight out of a tropical paradise storybook. The blue, calm waters of the lagoon, sprinkled with green, jungle-topped islands, reflect a blazing sun and clear sky. The clarity of the water shows its bounty—the bottom is covered with corals, stretches of pure white sand and clouds of fish, as far as the eye can see.

ACCOMMODATIONS: With its modern, developed area around the main island of Koror, Palau offers a variety of accommodations, from world-class luxury to economical choices. Its most well-known resort, Palau Pacific Resort, is considered one of the finest dive resorts in the world. Featuring a white sand beach, swimming pool, fine restaurants and immaculately groomed hotel grounds, its rooms are modern and sumptuous and its staff has been well-trained in the nuances of customer service. With a dive center

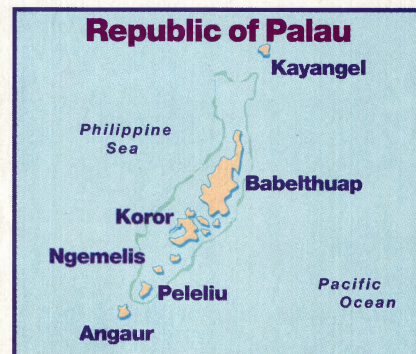
(Splash), photo center (Photo Palau) and dive boats on site, it is a marvelous base for a Palau dive adventure. Sunrise Villa sits atop a high hill, with majestic views of the lagoon. It has 34 comfortable rooms and an excellent restaurant. Palau Marina, a reasonably priced hotel, frequented by divers from both the U.S. and Japan, sits at waterside near Koror's harbor. It provides an excellent new restaurant and bar and great diving convenience—just next door is the Fish 'n Fins Dive Center, Palau's longest established dive operator.

A new accommodation, The Carolines Resort, offers five bungalows, built in traditional (but with all modern conveniences) island style. On a hill just overlooking the lagoon, its divers are picked up by boats at Palau Pacific Resort's dock. For those looking for economy accommodations, there are several properties to choose from, including West Plaza Hotel by the Sea, West Plaza Hotel Downtown and the DW Motel.

For those desiring an island experience, the Carp Island Resort is on a small island 30 miles south of Koror. Near the major diving areas, it provides comfortable lodging in the quiet surrounds of a pristine portion of Palau's lagoon.

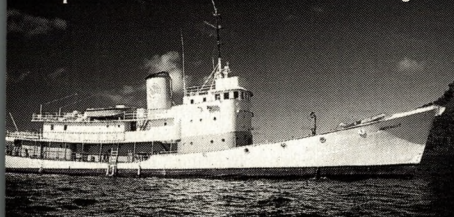
DIVE OPERATORS: With the popularity of Palau's diving, the professionalism of its dive operators comes as no surprise. Catering to both American and Japanese divers, these dive centers provide full services and, with their years of experience on Palau's reefs, can show the very best of what Palau has to offer.

Fish 'n Fins, Palau's original dive operation, has provided daily trips to Palau's top dive spots for more than 20 years. Next door to the Palau Marina Hotel, Fish 'n Fins uses small, fast boats for quick trips to dive areas. Neco Marine is a modern retail facility that operates a fleet of boats. A PADI Dive Center, Neco offers instruction and photo services and picks guests up at most Palau hotels. Splash is a PADI Five Star Dive Center on the dock at the Palau Pacific Resort. Its two large, jet-driven dive boats feature hot showers, photo tables and heads for the utmost comfort. For its divers' photo needs, Photo Palau, a full service, under-



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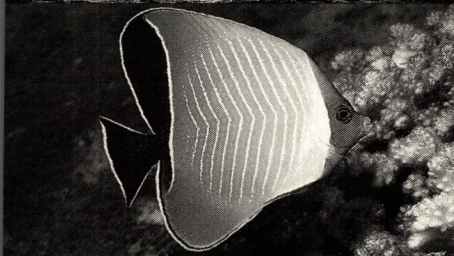
Truk Lagoon



Ocean Hunter

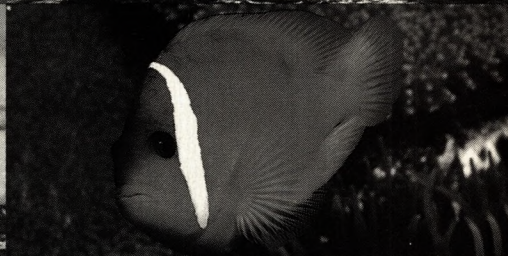


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water photo center, is just next door. Another original Palau dive operation, Palau Diving Center, is operated by the same company as the Carp Island Resort. Serving both Japanese and

American guests, the center operates three modern dive boats and has PADI, NAUI and JP (a Japanese agency) instructors on staff. Sam's Dive Tours is a PADI International Resort Association member. One of the newest of Palau's operations (open for eight years), Sam's caters chiefly to American divers. With a selection of kayak and topside tours (to

World War II sites, caverns and waterfalls) augmenting its dive program, the center can show guests a fascinating aspect of Palau not always seen by visitors.

LIVE-ABOARDS: Peter Hughes' *Sun Dancer* is a 119 foot long, ocean cruising vessel. With eight spacious staterooms accommodating 16 passengers, it creates a luxurious, uncrowded atmosphere. Fine dining, full photo services and a great dive tender boat make the ship an excellent means to explore the entire Palau archipelago.

The *Palau Aggressor II* measures 110 feet in length in a twin-hulled catamaran design that enjoys both speed and stability. With eight private staterooms for 16 passengers, it provides complete dive services, including photo processing, excellent buffetstyle meals and a range of entertainment, all in a modern, comfortable setting.

Designed for small groups, *Ocean Hunter* is a 60 foot long motorsailer that carries up to six passengers. Her dive cruises can be custom designed, lasting from 5 to 14 days, for an enjoyable, economical live-aboard experience. It should be noted that since *Ocean Hunter* anchors right on each site and guests can dive whenever they wish, she offers more dives per day than any other live-aboard in the area.

THE BEST DIVES: Palau's most popular dive for more than 20 years, **Blue Corner** is like a three ring circus—U/W. At the top of a steep outer wall, at only 45 feet, divers remain stationary while a marine life parade takes place just an arm's length away. Gray Reef Sharks, usually 20 to 30 in a pack, cruise by; a huge school of Blackfin Barracuda is usually in residence; and a three foot long Napoleon Wrasse is most always there.

Palau's most exciting dive is **Peleliu Corner**, off the southern tip of Peleliu Island and increasingly becoming standard to most dive operators' itineraries. A steep, rough wall, cut with canyons and grottos, drops dizzily from 45 feet to deep water. The current brings nutrients to the wall's inhabitants; gorgonians, soft corals, seaweeds and huge, Black Coral bushes that grow thickly across its face. Large groupers are resident and large Wahoo, Dogtooth Tuna, Black Jacks and other oceanic predators are numerous. And, sharks are everywhere!

In the channel that cuts close to Ngemelis Island, **Big Drop-off** is a steep, vertical wall covered with corals, soft corals and large gorgonians. There are large orange anemones, clouds of reef tropicals and Green Turtles cruising by regularly. Gray Reef Sharks patrol the wall below and a resident pack of Whitetip Reef Sharks swims rapidly about in the shallows at the top of the wall.

One of Palau's most interesting dives,



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Ulong Channel is a narrow, 50 foot deep cut that runs through the reef near Ulong Island. It is a ride in or a ride out, depending on which way the tide is running. Schools of Mahogany Snappers congregate and, during the spring spawn, hundreds of large groupers gather. Gray Reef, Blacktip and Whitetip Reef Sharks cruise the passage. Turtles are also frequent visitors.

Atop the reef flat near Blue Corner, several irregularly-shaped **Blue Holes** bore straight down, opening into a large central cavern. The sides are covered with schooling fish and sunbeams shift and play along the coralline walls. At 90 feet, the cavern opens onto the reef's steep wall, into the cobalt blue deep water. Whitetip Reef Sharks often congregate at the mouth and huge gorgonians hang from the top of the opening.

A new exciting dive site has been developed in recent years, in the **German Channel** passage to the outer reef. With an increasing frequency, Mantas have begun congregating around a cleaning station on the channel's white sand bottom.

One of the most remarkable sites to be found anywhere, **Jellyfish Lake** is a marine lake trapped inside one of the rock islands. Here, visitors snorkel with a huge school of *Mastigias* Jellyfish, estimated to number more than two million.

Another of Palau's special dives provides a glimpse into the fierce fighting that took place in Palau during World War II. One of a number of Japanese ships sunk during the air raids of Operation Desecrate, the **Teshio Maru**, a 321 foot long freighter, lies on its side in 70 feet of water. The huge wreck is intact, a fatal torpedo hole in the forward hold giving testimony to its violent demise. Nature's unceasing energy is evident as well—corals and other marine life richly adorn the wreck and a resident school of Barracuda swirls around the superstructure.

LAND TOURS: There are an increasing number of land tour options being offered to Palau's visitors. These should not be missed, not only for the beautiful topography, flora and fauna that will be seen, but also for the fascinating World War II wreckage. A very interesting hike is up Ngeruktabel Island, to the site of an old German lighthouse. In the 45 minute walk, there are many relics from the war, including bunkers, large artillery pieces and destroyed buildings. At the island's south end, a small islet that can be reached only by boat contains a huge cavern. Inside, there are well-formed stalactites and stalagmites that glisten under a flashlight beam.

Scattered throughout the cavern are hundreds of human bones; in ancient times, the grotto was used as a burial vault. Other options include the Peleliu

War Memorial, Seaplane Cavern and a large waterfall on Babelthup Island.

YAP

Just an hour and 15 minutes southwest of Guam, as the intermediate stop on Continental Micronesia's flight to Palau, lie the islands of Yap. The tops of submerged mountains, their green, rugged hillsides jut from the blue ocean's otherwise unbroken horizon. Yap, though easily accessible to tourists, has managed to steadfastly hold to its traditional ways, including its tribal chiefs' style of government. Little affected by the outside world, Yap is a place where visi-

tors may easily experience the realities of Micronesia culture. Especially interesting is Yap's continued use of ancient stone money. Around the various villages, there are huge circular disks of stone, a hole carved in their centers, that sit on display. These stones, carved in olden times in Palau and transported the arduous 750 miles by canoe, once served as the currency for Yap's economy. Value was determined by the size of the stone and the difficulty of the return voyage to Yap. Today, they are still used as collateral for major transactions.

Visitors are treated with a shy, friendly curiosity and those who express polite

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interest in the local people will often be surprised by the welcoming response. There are opportunities to visit local vil-



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lages, eat local foods and witness traditional dances and sings—things that should not be missed.

For divers, however, Yap is even more special. Beneath the clear waters that surround its shorelines, nature has prepared another of her wonderful surprises. Each morning, on the incoming high tide, schools of huge Manta Rays enter one of Yap's two tidal channels and spend several hours hovering over certain coral heads, waiting to be cleaned by swarms of small reef fishes. The setting provides an opportunity that is unique; the chance to observe as many as 10 to 20 huge Mantas from just a few feet away as they participate in a daily ritual that has been occurring uninterrupted over the ages.

ACCOMMODATIONS AND DIVING: The choices of accommodations and dive services in Yap are easy ones. Yap Divers, whose general manager, Bill Acker, discovered and developed the Manta dives, is on the grounds of the Manta Ray Bay Hotel, also managed by Bill. But, just because choices in Yap are few, it doesn't mean there is any less attention paid to customer service, comfort and satisfaction. The hotel is modern,



well-maintained and well-appointed. There is an excellent restaurant and bar on the top floor (which is, in fact, the center for the island's social scene) and the 23 rooms are air-conditioned, furnished with refrigerators and video systems; several rooms have waterbeds.

The dive operation conducts dives from several fast, comfortable flattop boats and, as a PADI Five Star Dive Center, provides a full range of equipment rentals and an excellent selection of diver training courses, including the Manta Diver specialty. Associated with Yap Divers is Manta Visions, a new, full-service video and photo center run by veteran dive instructor, Steve Fish.

YAP'S BEST DIVES: In Mil Channel, on the island's east side, is **Manta Ridge**, a coral prominence that rises in 40 feet of water. On the morning incoming tides, as many as 10 to 12 Mantas, each with wingspans of up to 12 to 14 feet, ride the current into the site. Taking turns, they hover over the ridge and a horde of small fish begin to roam over the Mantas' bodies, in and out of their gaping gills, searching for isopods and other parasites.

In Goofnuw Channel, on the island's western side, **Valley of the Rays** is the summer/fall location for the Manta's cleaning, with Manta Ridge the chief spot during the rest of the year. Here, at the bottom of a 60 foot channel, a huge coral mound sits on a coral and gravel bottom. Divers kneel on the sides of the mound as the Mantas wheel in for cleaning. As the Mantas move away, they often pause just over the divers' heads, obviously curious, providing the opportunity for very close observation.

On the island's north end, in very clear water, **Yap Caverns** is a jumbled terrain of grottos, caves and swim-throughs at the edge of a steep drop-off. A white sand bottom creates a lovely photographic setting and fish life is profuse. Green Turtles, often completely unafraid of divers, are common as well.

Near Yap Caverns, **Lionfish Wall** is on a steep section of the drop-off. Huge, leathery brown zoanths cover the wall and colorful reef fish congregate in clouds. Off the wall, in blue water, Gray Reef Sharks patrol and squirrelfish move about the face, under deep ledges. In one section of the wall, a series of overhangs provides shelter for an amazing collection of lionfish, as many as five species congregated together.

CHUUK

An hour and a half to the southeast of Guam, Chuuk is the home of the world's most famed wreck diving location, Truk Lagoon. In the calm, clear waters of the lagoon's 140 mile circumference lies the Japanese fleet that was targeted by Operation Hailstone, during World War II.

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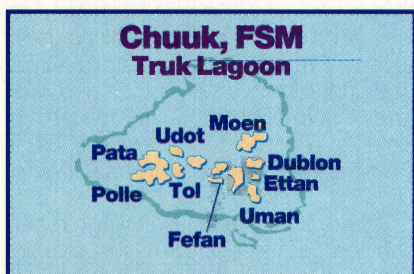

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Repeated waves of bombing brought destruction to virtually all of the islands' naval, air and communication facilities, downed some 416 Japanese planes and sank 60 ships. Chuuk was then left alone and largely forgotten after the war's end.

It wasn't until nearly 30 years later that the world again became aware of the quiet lagoon and its sleepy islands; visiting divers discovered an incredible undersea marvel left from those horrendous days of war. Beneath the still waters, huge



ships—freighters, destroyers, tankers and tenders—maintained a silent vigil.

But, there was more—Mother Nature, never still, had performed a miracle, turning these huge weapons of war into undersea gardens; their decks, guns, masts and rigging grown thick with colorful soft corals, gorgonians and sponges. Swirling schools of fish had claimed the wrecks as their own. And everywhere lay the personal belongings of

those who died in Hailstone's destruction. Today, Truk Lagoon remains a memorial to history and the folly of war.

ACCOMMODATIONS AND DIVING: Deciding where to stay and how to dive Truk Lagoon should be determined by the dive experience desired. Very specialized in their offerings, Truk's dive operators provide decidedly different dive experiences. For those wishing to fully explore individual wrecks, there's the live-aboard *Truk Aggressor II*. Each day the 110 foot long vessel anchors at a different wreck and guests can explore to their heart's content. The ship's seven air-conditioned staterooms, each with private bath, provide a comfortable setting. The large main salon, photo facilities and entertainment options make *Truk Aggressor* an excellent base for diving and photography.

For those who wish to dive as many of the wrecks as possible, the 165 foot long live-aboard *Thorfinn* provides a different but equally specialized approach. *Thorfinn* anchors in a quiet portion of the lagoon and sends out several small boats up to five times each day, to a different wreck. She can comfortably accommodate 22 passengers in 11 air-conditioned double cabins, complete with TV and VCR. *Thorfinn* offers excellent food, video and other entertainment options and a real surprise—a spa on the stern deck. For divers who desire a

shore-based experience, there are three hotels, all on the main island of Moen. These are the Truk Continental, the Kurassa Hotel and the Truk Stop Hotel.

Dive services are provided by excellent dive operators. Blue Lagoon Dive Shop is Truk's oldest dive operation and its owner, Kimio Aisek, is credited as being the original dive explorer of Truk Lagoon and its many wrecks. His son, Gradvin Aisek, is now manager of the operation and has shared his father's love of Truk's wrecks since he was a child. The second dive operation established in Truk, Micronesia Aquatics, is on the grounds of The Truk Continental and is operated by Clark Graham and his wife Chineina. Clark is regarded by most as Truk's resident historian and his video of the history of Truk Lagoon is considered a definitive work for anyone interested in the lagoon and its collection of wrecks.

Sun Dance Tours and Dive Shop is a newer operator in Truk and serves clientele from several of the local hotels. Near the Truk Stop Hotel, like the area's other operators, it serves both Japanese and American clientele.

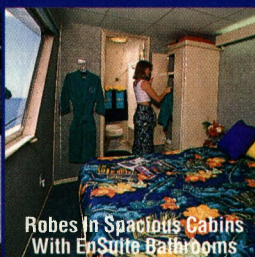
THE WRECKS: Perhaps the most beautiful wreck in the lagoon, the **Shinkoku Maru** is a 450 foot long tanker. The top of the bridge is in only 45 feet of water and the *Shinkoku* is literally covered with soft corals and schooling fish. The bridge, with its telegraph, bow gun and



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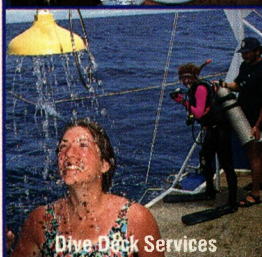
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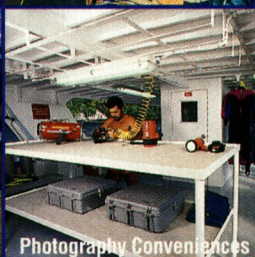
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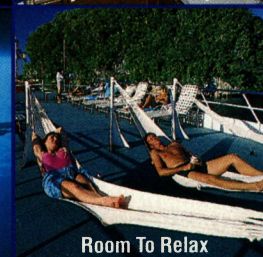
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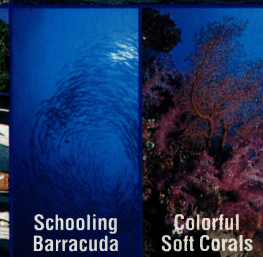
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huge masts, draped with corals and sponges, makes this wreck a fascinating dive exploration.

One of the best known and most dramatic wrecks in the lagoon, the **Fujikawa Maru** is a 435 foot long, six hold aircraft ferry. Lying upright on a bright sand bottom, her masts break the surface, her stacks are at 35 feet and her decks at 60 feet. Her six inch stern guns are now beautifully transformed by colorful, hanging soft corals. Airplanes, airplane parts and a room with a tiled Japanese bath are among the unique sights inside the *Fujikawa*.

Off the seaward side of Dublon Island, the **Nippo Maru** is one of Truk's most fascinating wrecks. A 350 foot long freighter, she sits upright in deep, clear water near the opening to the reef, bombed as she tried to escape the lagoon when Hailstone began. Her bridge is at 80 feet and the deck between 110 and 120 feet. Her masts, alive with coral growth and swarms of Trevally, rise toward the surface. On her decks are artillery pieces, a tank and a truck.

An incredibly decorated wreck is the

368 foot long munitions ship **Sankisan Maru**. Sitting upright, her deck is in only 50 feet of water. Her main mast breaks the surface and photographers shooting macro, can spend an entire dive studying the profuse growth that crowds every inch. There are also machine guns, a Jeep and a hold brimming with thousands of large caliber machine gun bullets, spilling out of their original wooden cases.

Reef dives are conducted as well, with vertical walls and big marine animals. Spots such as **Big Blue** and **Northwest Barrier Reef** provide exciting encounters with sharks, Mantas and Eagle Rays.

POHNPEI

Between Truk and Kosrae, Pohnpei is the top of an ancient submerged volcano. One of the larger Micronesian islands, it is approximately 12 miles long and 14 miles wide, covering about 160 square miles. Just offshore, a barrier reef encircles the entire island, creating an extensive inner reef area. In the calm, clear waters are hundreds of acres of coral gardens, sand flats and shallow channels. On the outside, the reef wall is steep, rising from the deep, crystal clear water of the Pacific.

ACCOMMODATIONS: Pohnpei's most popular accommodation is a lovely, is-

land-style resort know as The Village. Its thatched palm bungalows built onto the side of a steep, jungled hill, offer spectacular views. The resort's restaurant is well known for its excellent food. Other choices for visiting divers are several economical hotels such as The Harbor View, Cliff Rainbow Hotel, Hotel Pohnpei, South Park and The Palm Terrace Hotel.

DIVE OPERATORS: Pohnpei is home to a number of professional dive operators, several who serve Americans and several who specialize in services for Japanese divers. Phoenix Marine Sports Club, catering to both an American and Japanese dive clientele, is in downtown Kolonia. A large scale operation, it runs six different dive boats and has five instructors on staff.

Village Divers is at The Village resort and services its guests. The first dive operation to open on Pohnpei, its divemasters are credited with having discovered many of the island's most popular dive sites. Iet Ehu Tours specializes in small groups and its local boat captains are highly regarded for their knowledge of Pohnpei's reefs. Blue Oyster Dive Shop and Tours provides diving services and land tours.

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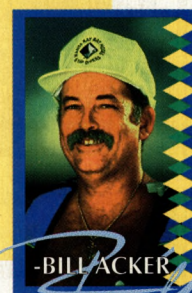
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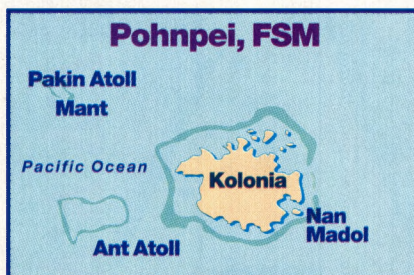
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Ant Atoll is one of two coral atolls 10 miles to the southwest of Pohnpei. Crystal clear water is its trademark and its coral gardens are teeming with reef tropicals. It also has a large pass, Ant Pass, through the reef, that provides exciting shark action. Pakin Atoll is 18 miles to the northwest and is noted for massive gorgonians and huge coral structures.

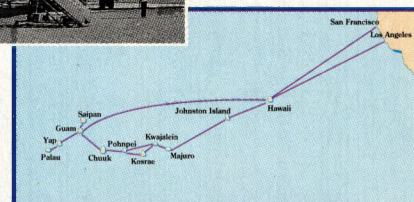


KOSRAE

Just southeast of Pohnpei lies Kosrae, the second largest Micronesia island and one of the most beautiful. A history of shifting foreign occupation has left its mark on the local culture. The Spanish, Germans, Japanese and Americans all controlled the island's fate at one time or another over the last 400 years. Visitors today will find a quiet, outback island with friendly people; modern enough to provide comfortable amenities but preserved enough to be a step away from the outside world.

For divers, Kosrae's fringing reef provides dive sites along a richly covered coral slope. The reefs are pristine; a huge variety of corals and reef fish are the prin-

Continental Micronesia operates island hopper service to Micronesia three times weekly, originating in Honolulu.



cipal attractions. And, during December, sea turtles congregate and come ashore to lay eggs during the night.

ACCOMMODATIONS AND DIVE OPERATORS: Kosrae's accommodations op-



tions have been growing in recent years and there are a number from which to choose. The Sandy Beach Hotel has four cottages on the beach and six hotel rooms, all air-conditioned. It has recently been expanded to include a restaurant on the premises. Also on the hotel grounds is Dive Caroline, a small, full service dive center.

Pacific Tree Lodge features six duplex bungalows set among the mangroves. Modernly furnished, each of the 12 rooms is air-conditioned and has television, VCR and telephone. There is a new restaurant on the property. The Phoenix Marine Sports Club, a branch of the Phoenix operation in Pohnpei, provides dive services. Kosrae Village Resort is built in traditional island-style at water's edge. Its bungalows are comfortable and economically priced. The resort features a restaurant and dive operation on-site.

Kosrae Nautilus is a new 16 room, all-inclusive resort. It has a restaurant, pool, sandy beach and dive center; the dive boat is nearby. The dive operation is run by a certified divemaster.

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The Marshalls are a scattering of 29 atolls and five larger islands about five hours from Honolulu. Low lying, they offer white sand, coconut palms and calm, clear tropical lagoons. Divers are just beginning to discover their treasures.

MAJURO ATOLL: A chain of long, slender coral islands encircling a huge lagoon, Majuro is the most developed of the Marshalls.

There are several choices of accommodations and dive services around Majuro. The best known hotel is the Robert Reimers. It has comfortable, inexpensive rooms and a restaurant on the premises. At the hotel dock is Marshalls Dive Adventures, a full service dive operation that has two dive boats and visits dive sites around Majuro and other nearby atolls. Majuro's other dive operator is Dolphin Divers, providing services to small, private groups.

The best Majuro Lagoon dives are **Coral Pinnacles, Delap Point, The Parking Lot** and the **Channel**. On all-day trips it's also possible to visit more


B-25 bombers and Japanese Zeros. On the outside of the reef, steep walls offer prolific corals, sharks and other pelagics.

BIKINI ATOLL: During the cold war, the U.S. conducted a series of nuclear tests here, including the largest hydrogen bomb ever exploded. For divers there's a silver lining—a huge fleet of naval vessels, used as targets, litters the bottom of the lagoon.

Accommodations (traditional island cottages) are limited but dive services are now becoming available. Without a doubt, Bikini promises to be one of the

world's most unique dive experiences.

JALUIT LAGOON: To the southwest of Majuro by a short flight is Jaluit Lagoon. The center for the Japanese Administration of the Marshalls during WW II, it was extensively developed. Heavy bombing left a remarkable collection of sunken ships, planes and onshore wreckage.

Divers can now explore Jaluit's spectacular walls and shipwrecks. More than 20 have already been discovered, including the upside down Emily Flying Boat found last year. Large marine life is reported virtually everywhere. 



remote locations at Arno Atoll and Wau Island in Mili Atoll.

MILI ATOLL: Sixty miles south of Majuro is Mili. It can be reached by boat or by a short, 30 minute flight from Majuro. Long weekends can be enjoyed at six cottages on Wau Mili Island, near Mili Mili.

The diving is dramatic and just being discovered. Inside the lagoon there are coral gardens and passes; outside, crystal clear water thick with sharks and pelagics.

KWAJALEIN: Approximately 200 miles northwest of Majuro is Kwajalein, the largest coral atoll in the world. The lagoon and its surrounding reefs feature world-class diving, with wrecks, reefs and walls.

Divers visiting the lagoon can stay in the 26 room Anrohasa Hotel. Diving is provided by KADRI, managed by dive industry veteran Steve Gavegan.

Kwajalein's most popular dive is the German pocket battleship, **Prince Eugen**. The stern breaks the surface, the bow is at 120 feet. In other areas there are a number of Japanese ships,

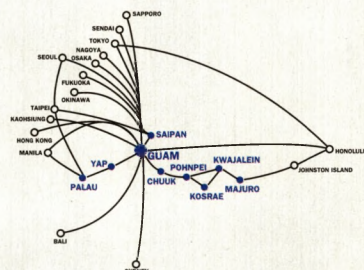


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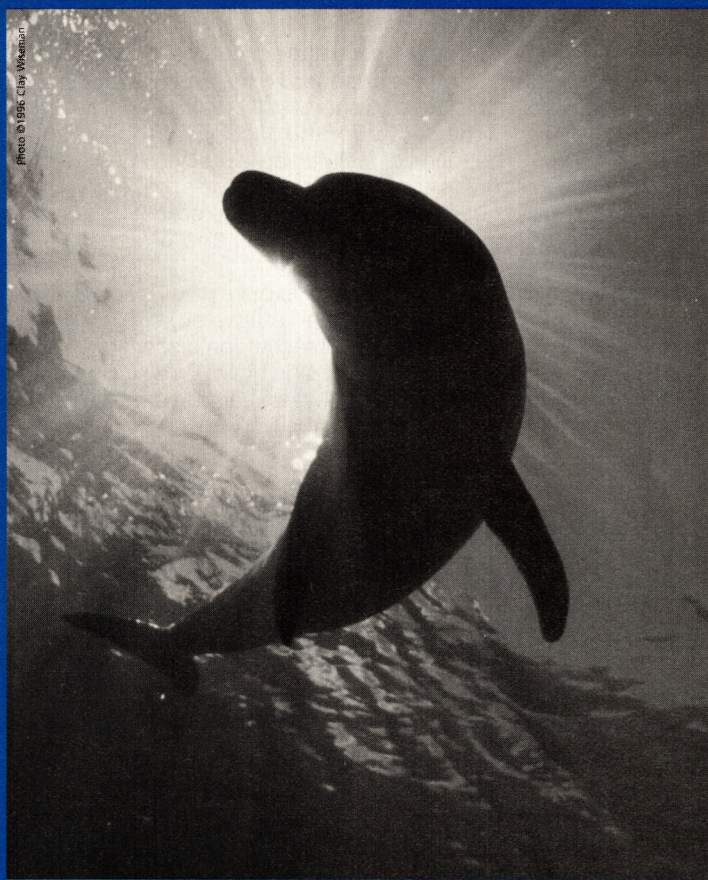
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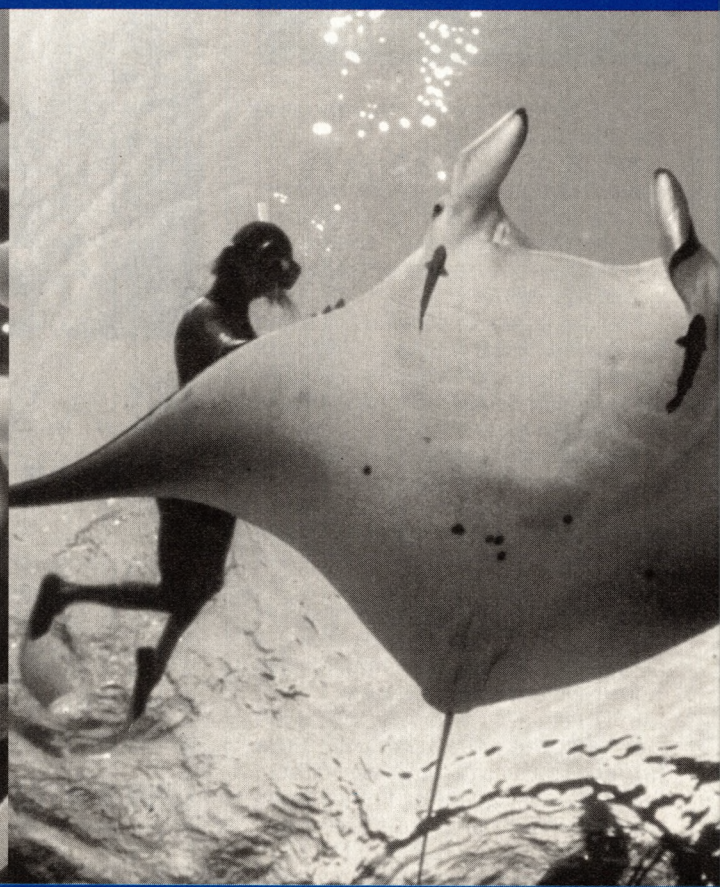


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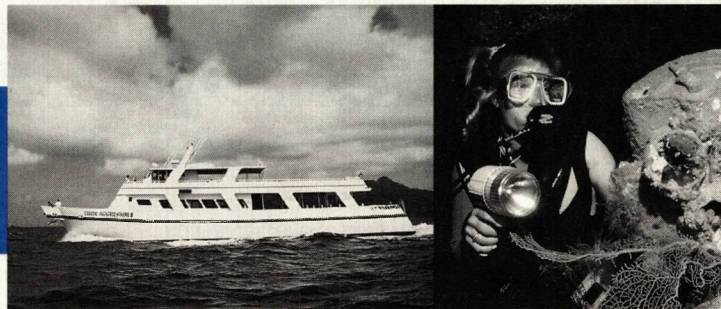
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Grand Cayman's Turtle Farm

Giving Something Back To The Sea...

TEXT AND PHOTOGRAPHY BY WALT STEARNS

Standing on the bridge of Parrots Landing's dive boat *Lorikeet* during our return to Red Bay, I counted close to a dozen small Green and Hawksbill Turtles cruising the shallows. Coming across sea turtles while diving the Cayman Islands during the past two years has become an almost daily occurrence for me. It was not always that way.

When I first began visiting the Cayman Islands in late 1979, turtles were rarely seen a turtle. At the time, I thought it odd, particularly because the sea turtle is the islands' symbol, depicted on the side of Cayman Airways jets, the currency, the official seal and advertisements.

Sea turtles are a strong part of the heritage of the Cayman Islanders. When Columbus first landed in the Caymans, the abundance of Green Sea Turtles inspired his name for them. He called them *Las Tortugas*, the turtles. During the 17th century turtle farming reached its peak, making the island a main provisioning stop for passing ships

in need of fresh meat. The turtles suffered severely from overharvesting.

But that was then and this is now—and a lot has changed. Sea turtles, through both protection and concerted restocking measures, are making a comeback. The largest numbers have come from the Cayman Turtle Farm. When it was founded in 1968 by Mariculture, Ltd., (the first of its kind anywhere) the venture was entirely commercial, with the sole goal of producing turtle

Above: Thanks, in large part, to the conservation efforts of the Cayman Turtle Farm, sea turtles are once again becoming a common sight in the Cayman Islands.



Above: As the young turtles grow they are moved to larger pools; many will be released into the wild. Right: Cayman Turtle Farm has several tanks for visitor viewing, education and hands-on excitement.



meat and byproducts. Around 1980, the Cayman Islands Government realized the plight of their sea turtles was severe and something had to be done. They immediately looked to Mariculture for their working knowledge of sea turtle husbandry. The idea—to begin a restocking program.

In 1983, after losing too much money as a commercial enterprise, the mariculture operation was purchased by the Cayman Islands Government. Through local support and government dedication, the farm has, during the past three and a half years alone, managed to release more than 5,000 Green and Hawksbill Turtles into Caymanian waters. While that's a highly commendable number, it is just a drop in the bucket when compared to turtle population that thrived in these waters more than three centuries ago.

A tour of the Turtle Farm is impressive. At present, the facility holds more than 16,000 turtles, of which 96 percent are Greens, the farm's mainstay. There is also one Loggerhead, several Hawksbills (primarily for exhibition purposes, as well as a few breeding pairs) and 420 Kemp's Ridleys.

Spanning an area twice the size of a basketball court, the facility's main breeding colony contains some 300 adult turtles. Typically, Green Sea Turtles do not reach sexual maturity until they are 15 to 25 years of age. The average weight of such an animal will run between 550 and 650 pounds. One of the farm's grand ladies tips the scales at a whopping 687 pounds!

Where does a turtle that big go?

Anywhere it wants! Getting bumped by one of these creatures when they get spooked, which happened to me when I climbed in to shoot a few stills, is somewhat like getting caught in a four car pile up. I nearly had more than the wind knocked out of me.

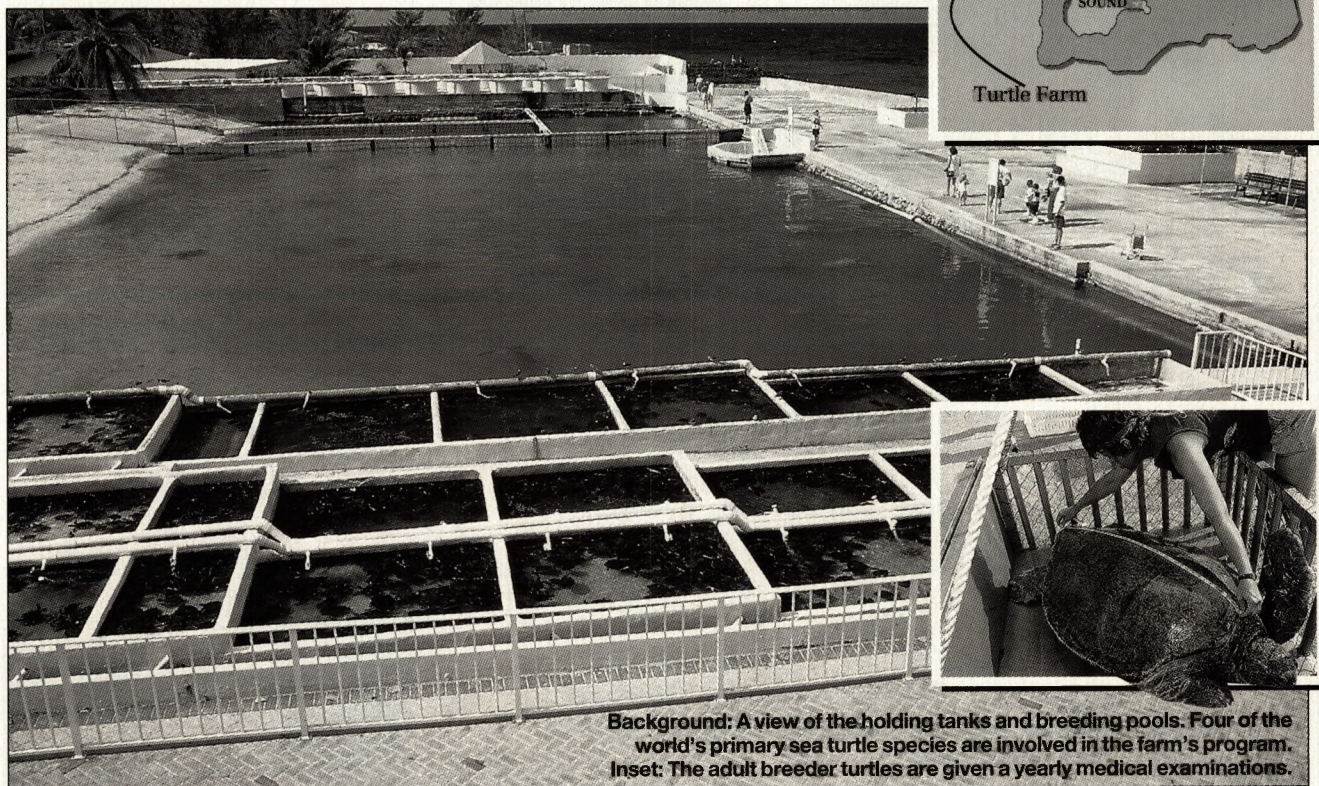
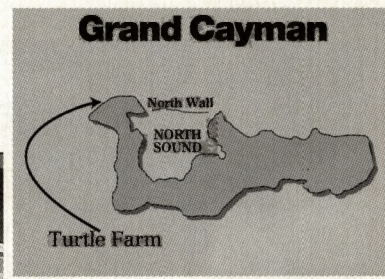
A clutch of eggs laid by a turtle usually numbers close to 100. The survival rate for hatchlings (at the farm) during their first year is roughly 50 to 60 percent. This is a huge difference over what their chances would be in the wild, between one and five percent at best. In order to keep both the farm and a feasible release program visible, certain production quotas must be met. This is not easy, even with a good mating season. For example, a bad season, such as the one back in 1994, produced only 3,000 hatchlings. On the other hand, a good season will be twice that, with a goal of 8,000. About 40 percent of those surviving the first year are released. After its first 12 to 14 months, a turtle is roughly the size of a hubcap and has a better chance than a hatchling to make the transition to the wild.

There are two methods of tagging for tracking purposes. One of the most universally practiced systems consists of titanium tags placed up from the tips of both the right and left foreflippers. The identity of each turtle (species, sex, release date) is kept on record at the farm and updated every time the animal is encountered, either through capture or sightings. All of the Cayman farm's alpha/numeric identification codes begin with the letters KY.

There is also a "living" tag, placed in the third, center scute (the divided sections of the top shell) down from the top, immediately after birth. This requires taking a shell graft from the belly of the hatchling's boneplate and placing it close to the middle of the top shell. This leaves a permanent white spot on the shell, something I have seen many times on turtles found on the island's reefs.

Once released, the turtles are not forgotten. To ascertain their progress, the farm performs several field surveys, most in North Sound. With the use of nets, farm employees and graduate students collect as many turtles as they can, including wild individuals. The turtles are then measured, weighed and given a cursory health checkup.

In addition to their work with Green and Hawksbill Turtles and working with the Mexican Government, the farm is currently establishing the first successful breeding program with the world's single largest collection of Kemp's Ridley Sea Turtles. The idea is to propagate new generations of this rare and highly endangered turtle to restock the Gulf of Mexico. Once the turtles are close to maturity, they will be given back to the Mexican Government for release. This is slated to take place as early as late 1996. When it



Background: A view of the holding tanks and breeding pools. Four of the world's primary sea turtle species are involved in the farm's program. **Inset:** The adult breeder turtles are given a yearly medical examinations.

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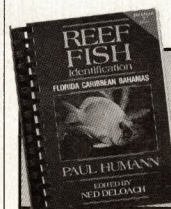
happens, it will mark the first ever cap- tively propagated Kemp's Ridley Turtles returned to the wild.

Besides this progressive work, the farm also functions as a rehabilitation center for injured and sick turtles. Whenever an injured turtle is brought in by the island's law enforcement officials it will be treated and cared for until it is deemed recuperated enough to go back into the wild. It will also be tagged (if it isn't already) and its data logged for fu- ture reference.

While the Cayman Turtle Farm has made some great strides, some do not approve of the farm in general. But, as Ken Hydes, the farm's general acting manager, says, "Basically, if the farm was not here to provide turtle meat, then they [the turtles] would be taken by other means; namely, through the harvesting of wild individuals. That is something nei- ther we as people, nor the turtle, can af- ford." I agree, wholeheartedly. There is no logic in overharvesting to the point of extinction. The most significant key to ef- fective wildlife conservation manage- ment of a commercially valued species is through conservative harvesting prac- tices and some form of restocking.

It must be understood that the facility is not an aquarium but a fully operational farm, specializing in sea turtle maricul- ture. Yet, for visitors, it is a fascinating ed- ucational tour. Financially, the farm does not make a profit; rather, it is lucky to break even. When compared to the cost of raising commercially viable turtles, the farm loses roughly 15 to 18 cents for ev- ery pound of turtle sold. What keeps it operating in the black actually is visitors.

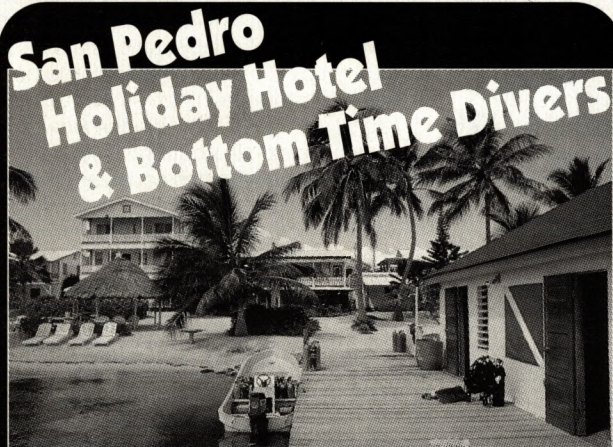
While that might make it an accounting nightmare, Ken pointed out that "It's still a wonderful feeling to see something get put back into our waters....[and] when people visit the farm, they leave with a better appreciation or understanding of sea turtles. It not only makes good eco- logical sense, it also enhances tourism through replacement of animals that were once nearly decimated. I'm sure the divers who visit the Caymans don't mind seeing them on an increasing basis un- derwater." No argument from me there. After all, when cruising along a drop-off or over the top of a colorful reef, who doesn't enjoy seeing a sea turtle? 🐢



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CAPTAIN SLATE'S

(Continued from Page 137)

deckplates and mostly intact bow now harbor a wide diversity of marine life. A resident school of Porkfish is dependably found amid the crimson gorgonians decorating the starboard bow section.

The queen of the Key Largo shipwreck fleet is the U.S. Coast Guard cutter **Duane**. Intentionally sunk as a dive attraction by the Key Largo dive and business community in November of 1987 (along with her sister ship the *Bibb*), the *Duane* rests on the bottom at 120 feet. At 327 feet long, she has considerable profile as well. Since she sits perfectly upright, the crow's nest is encountered at about 45 feet and the wheelhouse at 80. Most *Duane* dives are done to about 100 feet, thereby accessing the main decks. The propellers are the only real reason to drop to 120 feet but since doing so costs considerable bottom time, Atlantis, like most Key Largo dive operators, prefers to target the main deck for maximum depth. The wreck is becoming nicely encrusted with sponges, colonial hydroids and even hard corals. Marine life is abundant. Clouds of grunts clog the wheelhouse and chartrooms, while schools of Barracuda ride at constant vigil along the crow's nest.

For more information about Captain Slate's Atlantis Dive Center Instructor Institute of Key Largo, dive packages with Howard Johnson Key Largo Resort or local dive options, phone (800) 331-3483 or (305) 451-3020. The fax number is (305) 451-9240 or you can contact Captain Slate at his e-mail address, capt-slate@aol.com.

SAND DOLLAR DIVE AND PHOTO

(Continued from Page 127)

some of those birds is as tough as finding a frogfish on your own and the guide makes it all worthwhile!

Indeed, I never thought I'd see the day when you had to make a choice of which activities to participate in. But, they're all here at Sand Dollar. What is particularly attractive about nearly all of the activities is they are tuned to the style of Bonaire, a laidback appreciation of nature (above and below), and not giving in to the temptation of glitzy nightlife. Bonaire is still Bonaire but the rapidly expanding menu of nondiving activities ensures more family members and friends can enjoy it!

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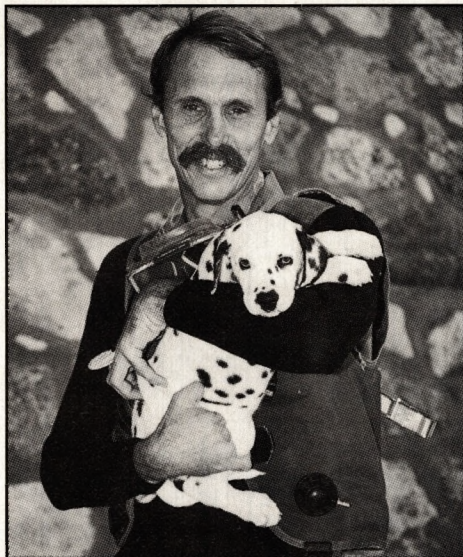
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This diving only package provides the guest with greater flexibility at very affordable prices. If a guest is interested in more than just diving, Red Sail Sports also offers the Dive, Dive, Dive and Sail package. This includes a sunset sail aboard the 53 foot *Balia* catamaran.

Red Sail Sports is a Hyatt Hotels and Resorts affiliate company and has established operations in Aruba at the Hyatt Regency Aruba Beach Resort and Casino, Americana Aruba Beach Resort and Casino, Aruba Sonesta Resorts and, coming soon, Aruba Hilton and Casino and Aruba Marriott Resort and Casino. The seven year old Red Sail Sports offers a variety of activities and vacation packages featuring scuba diving and accommodations with its hotel partners. For reservations and information, call (800) 255-6425.

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INTERNATIONAL COMMERCIAL DIVING INSTITUTE

(Continued from Page 33)

ground is very similar to Dave Stoudt's. They both graduated from the same dive school and moved into the commercial world. Phil spanned the globe doing air diving and surface gas diving in such places as Scotland, India, the North Sea, the Far East, the Pacific, the West Coast of the United States and the Gulf of Mexico. His forte is ship's husbandry.

John Marinelli teaches wet welding, topside welding, first aid, CPR, rigging, diesel engine maintenance and operation and is the inland diving instructor at ICDI. John was a topside welder, a truck repairman and an ironworker before becoming a commercial diver. His first commercial work was with an underwater construction company in Connecticut. They trained him for underwater nuclear welding and sent him to Puerto Rico to replace the legs on a pier. After Puerto Rico, he changed companies and worked offshore in the Gulf of Mexico doing inspections, cleaning, videotaping and jetting out and exposing pipelines. Marriage and a desire to be closer to home brought John to a job with Maryland Diving, which does about 75 percent of all the commercial diving in the State of Maryland. He did jackhammering, water drilling and installed and anchored dock systems.

To become an ICDI student, you must be at least 18 years old, have a high school diploma or GED and be in good physical condition. A physical examination with the physician of your choice is required. During the first week of classes, you will be given the U.S. Navy Standard Pressure and Oxygen Tolerance test at ICDI's hyperbaric chamber facility. This ensures you can equalize freely and breathe oxygen under pressure. Scuba certification is not required, since each student receives PDIC basic open water diver certification during the commercial diving course. Students need basic equipment: mask, fins, snorkel and a wet or drysuit. During the winter months, drysuits are imperative in the cold waters of the Christina River. In the middle and late summer, warm water makes wetsuits the logical choice.

A new class begins at ICDI on the first Monday of each month and the weekly schedule is a ten hour day, four days a week (Monday through Thursday). On the third day of class, in-water training begins. Each subsequent day is divided between five hours of classroom work and five hours of in-water training. The maximum class size is 12 students, ensuring each receives maximum attention.

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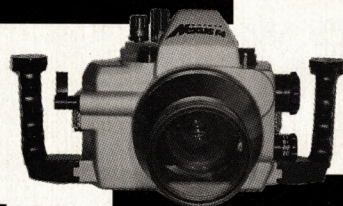
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The bottom line to becoming a commercial diver is finding work. Prior to graduation, ICDI's placement department uses its vast array of contacts to assist students in finding and securing their first jobs. Graduates can expect to earn an average entry level diver's salary of \$20,000 to \$30,000. Dave Stoudt commented on the status of the commercial job market for new graduates. "The Gulf of Mexico is busy right now and has been for some time. Many of the structures (oilrigs) are old and are going offline and being replaced by new ones. This provides plenty of work for commercial divers. Powerplants also provide plenty of work. Just this morning I had six openings in Florida that involve the nuclear power industry."

The students and instructors at ICDI are one big family. The staff and instructors are just as proud of the students as the students are of their instructors and the training program. When I asked Dave Stoudt why it was so easy for ICDI to place its students, he beamed and replied, "It's a combination of job availability and the graduates that we produce. We deal with a core group of contractors who know what they have gotten from us in the past and they continue to receive the same quality graduate now. They are more than happy to take our graduates."

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
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don't take my word or that of the instructors and staff, listen to students such as Farivar Rokni. His criteria was the same as all the students I interviewed—experienced instructors, state of the art training equipment and facilities, plenty of hands-on training, reasonable course fees, competitive financing and low cost housing. Farivar added, "The staff at ICDI is very friendly and helpful. It doesn't matter how cheap, how expensive or how good the school is, if they don't treat you right, you don't want to stay there." Farivar liked the treatment, he was only weeks away from graduation.

If you want to get firsthand information about ICDI, attend one of the free, bi-monthly, hands-on commercial diving seminars at its Wilmington facility. Scuba certified individuals can don a Superlite 17 or a Kirby Morgan Band Mask, make an actual commercial dive, participate in hyperbaric chamber operations, see a video on saturation diving and grill the staff and current students to their hearts' content. For those who are too far away to visit the facility, ICDI offers a video, *Discover Commercial Diving*, which features the ICDI facility. The video costs \$14.95, including shipping and handling.

For more information, write to the International Commercial Diving Institute, 550 South Madison Street, Wilmington, DE 19801. In Delaware call (302) 571-9981 or, out of state, call (800) 964-4234. The fax number is (302) 571-5756. 

TECHNIFACTS

(Continued from Page 34)

surfacing from a no decompression dive. In all other cases, follow standard decompression procedures carefully.

Cheri explained her dive profiles more completely. "When downloading my computer, it appeared the only thing I did 'wrong' was to swim very strenuously while chasing Hammerhead Sharks on the second dive of the third day. At no time did my computer go into the decompression mode." She also added, "I was diving with two men, one of whom dived almost exactly the same profile as myself. We used the same model computer and came up with exactly the same readings." According to Cheri, the second man in the team dived even more aggressive profiles with no safety stops at all. Neither man suffered DCS.

Cheri's increased exercise while chasing Hammerhead Sharks probably contributed to her being bent. Studies indicate that exercising divers do absorb more nitrogen than resting divers. By raising the volume of gas absorbed during a dive, exercise at depth increases decompression risk and time needed for safe decompression. In one study it was found

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TECHNIFACTS

that resting divers had a bends risk factor of 11 percent, while working divers had a risk of 21 percent. It is worth noting that strenuous exercise before diving has also been implicated in a higher incidence of bends. Also, sudden, violent contraction of muscles following a dive may contribute to DCS. For safe diving, moderation in all things should be the slogan at all times; before, during and after the dive.

It is unlikely there can be a technically accurate answer to Cheri's bends case. In her letter she stated, "I know of two other women divers who sustained DCS hits while using a computer side by side with a man." The male divers did not suffer DCS. Cheri felt no decompression tables and computers were designed for the average male diver. Her correspondence with dive shops and computer manufacturers brought the standard, evasive answer, "Everybody absorbs nitrogen differently." While this is an accurate statement it does not help prevent bends in divers who are following no deco tables or using a dive computer.

Are women more susceptible to DCS than men? For many years the commonly held view in diving medicine has been that they are. No compelling physiological reasons for this could be found. However, in the many reports of various studies, several reasons have been suggested. One of the differences was that women have an increased percentage of body fat. Also suggested were hormonal influences. And there were others, including some hypothetical suggestions.

A later study indicated that when men and women with like levels of aerobic fitness were compared the increased rates of DCS in women disappeared. I think the observation that women divers may be at greater risk cannot be ignored. An additional thought is that women may have to work a little harder at fitness for diving than men because they do have a slightly higher percentage of body fat. However, the real intimation here is that if men and women are to dive with reasonably low risk of DCS, they should maintain body fitness consistent with the activity. If fitness is not maintained, bottom time and decompression schedules should be adjusted accordingly.

Decompression is defined as the relief of pressure. Divers know every dive, regardless of depth, ends with decompression. The simple act of ascending from the deepest part of any dive to atmospheric pressure is decompression. However, because there are several kinds of pressure involved in diving, decompression is not that simple. Also, there are many variables in the physical

laws of gases and fluids (including those making up the human body) and their interaction with each other. In many cases the individual diver's responses to these interactions affect the functioning of the human body during decompression, sometimes leading to potentially serious decompression problems.

In the diving manuals of the 1930s and 1940s, it was postulated that the absolute pressure surrounding a diver could be reduced by one-half without danger of bubble formation. This was known as Haldane's two to one rule. This indicated that a dive to 33 feet for any length of time (two atmospheres absolute pressure), then surfacing to one atmosphere would not produce bubbles. Or, that a diver could make a prolonged dive to greater depths and ascend slowly to one-half the absolute pressure without danger of bubble formation. We now know the two to one rule is not completely valid. It does tell us, however, the relatively slow rate of tissue saturation and desaturation will allow for a no decompression dive profile if certain limits of depth and time are met. The no decompression tables we now use are based on this modified assumption.

In understanding the principles of decompression theory and the bends, it is important that divers realize tissue saturation takes place predominately as a physical absorption, not a chemical combination. The gases pass unchanged into the fluids and occupy the spaces among the fluid molecules. True, some oxygen combines chemically within the blood and is transported to tissues to meet metabolic needs. Possibly some very small part of the nitrogen component of air is also used in some manner. Certainly we know that in deep saturation diving, the body functions better with a small amount of nitrogen in the breathing gas. Somewhere, somehow, the body needs at least a small amount of nitrogen. Except for those small amounts, the gases remain unchanged; they are still gases. As the diver ascends slowly and finally surfaces, these gases are normally transported back to the lungs and are exhaled. However, if ambient pressure is reduced too much or too rapidly the gases may come out of solution as minute bubbles, while still in the tissues, and become hurtful and sometimes harmful.

Avoiding bends symptoms usually involves a decompression procedure that establishes the rate for pressure reduction. In diving, this may be accomplished by establishing a constant rate of ascent, such as 60 feet per minute. Or control may be by stage decompression with prescribed stops at various depths; for example, a stop at ten feet for ten minutes. Generally, modern decompression involves both methods. To safely decom-

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TECHNIFACTS

press from a dive, it is critical that both the rate of ascent and the staged stops, if any, set forth for the specific table or computer, be carefully followed.

All of this may sound as if safe diving is complex and difficult. It is not. In your dive training you learned the laws of gases and fluids and how they react under pressure and changes of pressure. To better understand decompression and the potentials for bends, it might be well for divers to review these basic physical laws. They still apply and must be observed.

In one of her letters Cheri wrote, "I have felt frustrated at times because there is so little research available on DCS and its many factors and symptoms.... I feel I have an obligation to myself to learn as much as I can so as to prevent this from happening again. I also feel I can be valuable to the group I dive with by sharing information and possibly preventing them from having to go through a similar experience.... You have been my most valuable source of information as yet and have made me feel there is someone out there listening and caring." Cheri can be sure that Technifacts and SKIN DIVER Magazine do care. We are grateful to be able to pass along your information so others can benefit. Thanks.

Most information on decompression research and bends is in technical papers that seldom become available to the general diving public. A resource I have found quite helpful is *Diving Medicine*. The 25 chapters are selected papers presented by an equal number of diving qualified physiologists with well established expertise. The book was written primarily for the physician involved in the care of divers. However, it is very readable and divers will understand most of the texts. Of particular interest will be Chapter 4, Mechanisms and Risks of Decompression, and Chapter 13, Women and Diving. The book is available from Best Publishing Company, P.O. Box 30100, Flagstaff, AZ 86003-0100. Call (800) 468-1055 for information.

EARTHQUAKES

In the September 1995 Technifacts, I asked readers to tell me how it felt to be U/W during an earthquake. William E. Wanamaker, USAID/Manila wrote, "I have had two such experiences. On November 26, 1995, we were diving at Verde Island. We were on the bottom in 70 feet of water looking for pottery shards from the wreck of the *Nuestra Senora de la Vida* that sank in 1621. Suddenly we heard a rumbling noise and felt vibrations, particularly in our chest cavities. It felt like short, rapid

surges. It was startling and a bit scary." Bill later confirmed through the Philippine Agency (PAGASA) responsible for disaster activities that what they had felt was one of two aftershocks following the main quake. The aftershock they felt at 10:15, midway through their first dive, registered 3.8 on the Richter Scale. "I am not sure but I think we were about five to six miles from the epicenter," Bill continued. "We also experienced a second quake on April 8, 1995, near Puerto Galera. It was loud; one diver thought it was a boat passing overhead. The vibrations were not as noticeable." Bill got the dates for the information from his logbooks. He also stated, "Far more frightening is being underwater when the dynamite fishermen are nearby. Dynamite blasts have a very different sound; earthquake tremors rumble for several seconds; a dynamite blast is a sharp, loud noise."

Thanks, Bill, for the information. We would like to hear from other divers who have been U/W during an earthquake.

NEW COMMERCIAL DIVING BOOK

SKIN DIVER Magazine is the principal advertising media for all of the several commercial diving schools. Also, SDM provides readers with periodic reviews of their training programs. Even with this exposure potential students are not always able to get all the information they need to make a judgment about which school to attend. Now that has changed.

Douglas Terrel, a retired commercial diver, diver educator, author and businessman has written the book that will help prospective students make a good selection. The title of his book is *Me? A Commercial Diver?*

The 80 page book not only discusses each of the several commercial dive schools, it gets into the whys and hows of becoming a commercial diver. The lifestyle of commercial divers is described, as are the long term possibilities and one-half dozen other questions a prospective student should ask. I agree completely with Terrel's suggestion, "Visit all the schools possible." But, read the book first so you will know what to look for. Then choose the one that seems to provide what you need to get your start in commercial diving. The book is available from Success in America, 5318 E. Second Street, Suite 135, Long Beach, CA 90803. The price is \$12.97. Dealer inquiries are invited.

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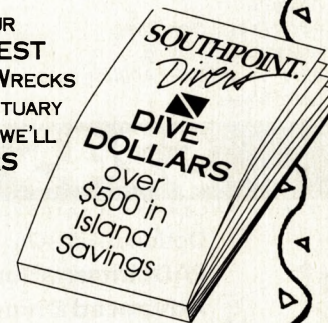
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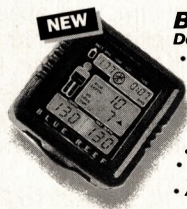
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- Double Console
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- Regulator Bag • Diver's Halogen Light
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- BLUE REEF Air Plus Regulator
- BLUE REEF Triple Digital Console w/Pressure
- BLUE REEF Air Max Octopus

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PACKAGE #1006

- TUSA BCD • BCJ-3500
- BLUE REEF Air Plus Regulator
- TUSA SCA-800 Triple Console
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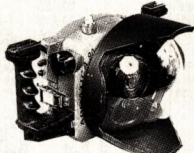
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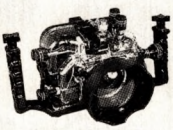
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SCUBAPRO EDI

(Continued from Page 6)

mation, surface intervals and any out of range violations for your last six dives in

The EDI also has an altitude adjustment feature. It can make computational adjustments to the decompression schedule for any diving between 2,300 and 8,200 feet above sea level. Suffice it to say, there are several restrictions to diving in this mode and diving at altitude should be done only after proper training and with a thorough familiarization of the limitations and instructions outlined in the EDI's owner's manual.

The EDI utilizes lithium manganese batteries, commonly used in pagers and easily obtainable. Replacement is a snap and requires no special tools.

The EDI console comes cradled in a protective, soft elastomeric boot that absorbs shocks and holds up well under abuse. A clear, protective lens cover saves the instrument face from scratches, slightly magnifies the display and is easily removed for replacement.

An optional and extremely convenient high pressure disconnect (the HP Quick Coupling) is available as an easy means of instrument removal from the first stage for travel or stowage. The fitting uses a threaded coupling and can be disconnected under pressure.

DR. HAHN'S ALGORITHM

We put a lot of faith in the decompression model used to derive our tissue saturation levels and thus our safe dive limits. In fact, we bet our lives on it. I, for one, don't want to compromise my safety one bit. Because high risk is not an option, Scubapro has implemented Dr. Max Hahn's P6 algo-

rithm, which utilizes both complex dissolved gas and bubble mechanics theories. The algorithm is based upon a risk reduction management system meant to keep the chance of decompression sickness as low as possible.

CONCLUSION

When we dive our world simplifies. The issues involved are very black and white. There's no fooling yourself without severe consequences and the general rules aren't all that flexible. Therefore, as divers, we must have the critical survival information readily available and in an easy to understand format. The vital information we need—remaining air, depth, time below, decompression status—is all found, at a glance, in the EDI's superbly designed

COMPARISON OF SCUBAPRO DIVE COMPUTERS

	T.R.A.C.	EDI	DC-12
Price	\$766 w/compass \$698 w/o compass	\$449	\$469 in VIP 3 Console \$399 in VIP 2 Console \$268 in wrist mount \$260 as module only
Case	Thermal plastic polyurethane/Krayton	Thermal plastic rubber	Lightweight polycarbonate
Weight in Air	1 pound, 11 ounces	14 ounces	2.1 ounces
Method of Attachment	HP hose	HP hose	HP hose for console, strap for wrist mount
Displays	Digital with icons and flashing warning arrows	Digital with icons and flashing warning arrows	Digital/analog with icons and flashing warning arrows
Depth Range	Full operation from 0 to 295 feet	Full operation from 0 to 295 feet	Full operation from 0 to 295 feet
Decompression Model	P-6 algorithm developed by Max Hahn, Ph.D.	P-6 algorithm developed by Max Hahn, Ph.D.	P-6 algorithm developed by Max Hahn, Ph.D.
Pre-Dive Scrolling	No decompression limits from 41 to 149 feet	No decompression limits from 41 to 149 feet	No decompression limits from 41 to 149 feet
Rate of Ascent Warning	Flashing down arrow	Flashing down arrow	Flashing down arrow
Altitude Range	Choice of two settings, sea level to 2,300 feet or 2,300 to 8,200 feet	Choice of two settings, sea level to 2,300 feet or 2,300 to 8,200 feet	Choice of two settings, sea level to 2,300 feet or 2,300 to 8,200 feet
Decompression Stops	Flashing deco stop depth and ascent time	Flashing deco stop depth and ascent time	Numerical depth display plus flashing Deco triangle
Battery Power	One 3 volt lithium cell; not user replaceable	One lithium manganese cell; user replaceable	One 3 volt lithium cell; not user replaceable
Computer Activation	Immersion in water or by touching contacts with moist fingertips	Immersion in water or by touching contacts with moist fingertips	Immersion in water or by touching contacts with moist fingertips
Low Battery Warning	Faded display	Faded display	Faded display
Remarks	Air integrated with digital and graphic oversized display designed by a human factors engineer for easy, intuitive readability.	Air integrated, all in one compact instrument with a clear, uncluttered display showing vital information. Available with HP Quick Coupling device.	Compact yet powerful, the DC-12 provides a wealth of vital dive data in an easy to understand fashion. The only other gauges you'll need are an SPG and compass.

USER COMMENTS

Intuitive display: "The display is perfectly structured for checking vital information with exceptional simplicity and quickness."

Compact design: "I liked the sleekness and the rubbery shroud. While diving, I hardly noticed it was there."

Con: "No con for this superbly designed little gem. I'd like to have one of my own."

memory. Additionally, the EDI remembers the total number of dives, total dive time and your all-time maximum depth.

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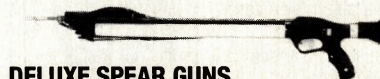
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ARUBA

(Continued from Page 111)

Nearby **Skalahein Reef** slopes gradually from 15 to 50 feet, then drops off more steeply past 100 feet. You can see the deeper part of the reef easily in the beginning of your dive and then work your way up leisurely to a safety stop at 15 feet. Delicate Black Corals and bushy Deep Water Seafans are common below 70 feet and hard corals such as Star and Smooth Brain begin to dominate the scenery as you ascend. The coral mounds are stacked so high in places that they look like fortresses. Spotted Eagle Rays are frequent visitors to Skalahein and Manta Rays are seen here occasionally.

There are very few airplanes to be found on the bottom, so the **Sonesta Planes** are a treat for most divers. A Convair 400, similar to the more familiar DC-3, rests upright and intact in about 50 feet of water. Perhaps because the water is such an unusual environment for planes, they seem even more ghostly than shipwrecks. In any case, the Sonesta DC-3 is a fascinating dive. On top of the coral slope a twin engine Beech-18 rests in about 15 feet of water.

The oil tanker **Pederalis** was sunk by the German submarine **U-156** on February 11, 1942. The undamaged bow and stern sections of the ship were welded together and used as a landing craft later in the war but the center section still rests near the beach in 25 feet of water. This is an easy dive but thoroughly enjoyable because of the proliferate fish life around the wreck.

A group of Unique Sports of Aruba divers returning to the beach were reminded that the ocean is full of delightful surprises when they encountered a 25 foot Whale Shark near the surface. With snorkelers from another boat, they spent more than 30 exhilarating minutes swimming with this gentle giant before it departed. It was a rare occurrence for Aruba but perhaps more will be seen in the future.

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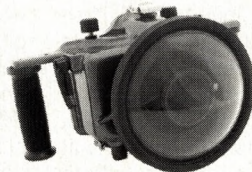
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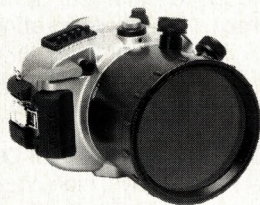


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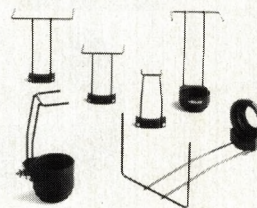


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ARUBA

covered principally by cactus. Such a superficial appraisal led the Spanish to categorize Aruba as an *Islas Inútiles*, useless island, in 1513. However, a tour around the island will quickly reveal its inner beauty. Everywhere you will see divi-divi trees, shaped into living sculptures by the trade winds. Formations of enormous granite boulders dominate the island in some areas. Along parts of the coast, waves of sand dunes seem to flow away from a base of moon-like lava rock.

Tourism is by far the most important business, with the emphasis on water-sports and the beach. Gourmet dining and shopping are also given high priority and, for about six weeks at the beginning of each year, Aruba surrenders itself to the colorful celebration of Carnival.

TRAVEL INFORMATION

Air Aruba offers nonstop flights from Tampa and Miami and direct flights from Newark and Baltimore. In ten years of operation, Air Aruba has established an excellent record of on time departures and a reputation for gracious service.

The average air temperature in Aruba is 83°F and you won't find it much different no matter what time of year you arrive. Lightweight, casual clothing is, naturally, most appropriate but there are also opportunities to dress up for dinner and dancing. Wearing bathing suits away from the beach or pool is discouraged, so cover-ups for going to and from the beach are a good idea.

The official language is Dutch, however, English is spoken fluently by nearly everyone in Aruba. Most residents also speak Dutch, Spanish and Papiamentu, the local language of Aruba. The official currency is the Dutch florin but U.S. dollars are accepted in most establishments and even your change will be received in dollars and U.S. coins.

For more information on diving Aruba, contact the Aruba Tourism Authority at (800) TO-ARUBA. You can also write to the U.S. office of the Aruba Tourism Authority at 1000 Harbor Boulevard, Weehawken, New Jersey 07087. 🐟

VIDEO COURSE

(Continued from Page 83)

detected moisture and shut off the power.

The best way to combat condensation is to prevent it from happening. Use a hair dryer to warm the camcorder—the lens, exterior and tape compartment—with warm (not hot) air before going out-

side. Condensation won't form if the camcorder is warm.

Outside, in direct sunlight, your problems aren't over. Sunlight can overheat the camcorder and could affect its taping capability. Thus, when it's not in use, keep the camcorder out of direct sunlight. Store it in a light-colored camera case or wrap it in a white cloth.

TOPSIDE VIDEO AT SEA

Shooting topside video on live-aboards and small boats can be hazardous to your camcorder's life. Looking back at dozens of trips, I've seen more camcorders damaged or ruined topside than underwater. The main culprits are saltwater spray, wet hands and dripping hair.

Don't take your camcorder out of its housing if there is a possibility of saltwater spray. The spray may be from waves when on a small boat but is often caused by other divers. They plot their dripping cameras on the table, blow off water with an air hose, drip water from their wetsuits onto the camera table and store their sodas and coffee on the same table. If you wish to shoot topside video under these conditions, keep the camcorder inside its housing. Yes, the port may degrade the image but would you rather risk ruining your camcorder?

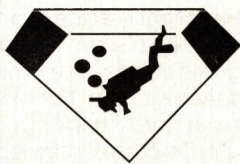
Before opening the housing, rinse it in fresh water, dry it with a towel and get away from all sources of spray. Make sure you dry the latches because some may toss water droplets onto the camcorder. Dry your face, hair and hands before opening the housing and looking down at your camcorder. It only takes one drop of seawater in the wrong place to damage a camcorder. Lastly, look before you act—decide exactly where you will put the camcorder before you remove it from the housing.

When not in use and stored outdoor, wrap your unhoused camcorder in a towel or place it inside an insulated carrying case to protect it from sun, excessive heat and spray. If spray is present during use, wrap your camcorder with transparent cling-wrap. You can still operate most controls and the wrap will ward off water droplets. For extended topside use in wet conditions, consider a flexible EWA Marine housing to make your camcorder splash proof. (Pioneer Marketing and Research, 216 Haddon Avenue, Westmont, NJ 08108.) To sum up, an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure.

THE OPTIMUM TIME OF DAY

On clear, sunny days, high noon isn't the best time to shoot topside video. Strong overhead sunlight creates harsh lighting. It accentuates dark shadows in eye sockets, beneath chins and causes subjects to squint. Skin blemishes and

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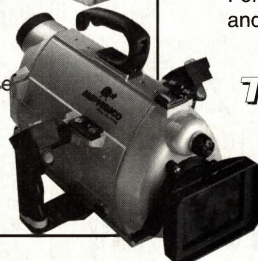
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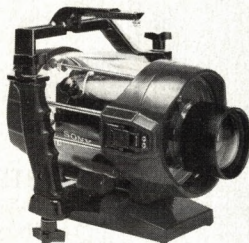
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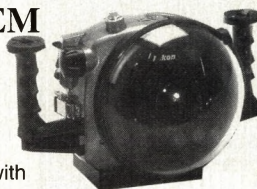


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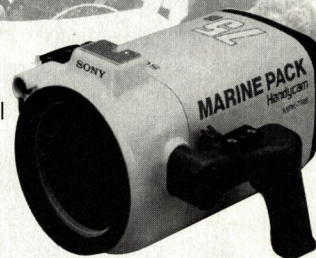
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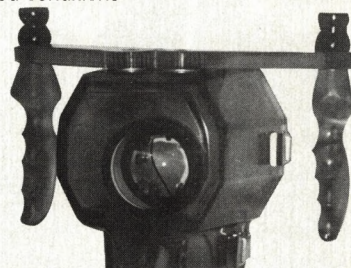
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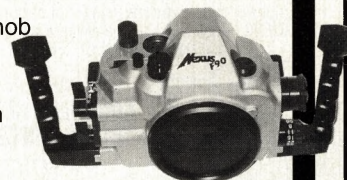


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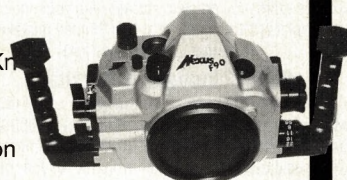


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VIDEO COURSE

wrinkles are accentuated and faces appear haggard.

The best ambient light is in the morning or afternoon, when the sun is at an angle of 45 degrees or less. The lower angle softens shadow areas. For best results, keep the sun to your back.

In bright sunlight, the contrast between sunlit and shaded areas can cause problems. Why? The camcorder can't record a brightness range as wide as your eye can see. For example, suppose your subject is sitting in the shade but her face is in the sun. The automatic exposure control may expose for the darker torso and overexpose the face. Conversely, if your subject is sitting under the canopy of a dive boat, the automatic exposure control may respond to the bright background and overexpose your subject's face.

There are three solutions to these problems:

1. Place your subject either totally in the sun or totally in the shade.
2. Use the manual iris override to increase exposure when subjects are backlit or silhouetted against bright backgrounds. (Some camcorders have a special control for backlit subjects.)
3. Use a reflector to bounce some fill light into the shadow side of the subject.

OVERCAST CAN HELP

Contrary to what many beginning videographers believe, you can often shoot better topside video on bright but overcast days. The overcast scatters the sun's rays and provides diffused lighting. This reduces the brightness range of light and dark subject areas, allowing your camcorder to record both light and dark areas more realistically. People look better when illuminated with soft, diffused light. They don't squint and don't have harsh shadows in their eye sockets and under their chins.

STEADYING THE CAMCORDER

When shooting topside scenic views, a tripod (or other mechanical aid) is one way to steady your camcorder. (On long trips, when weight is important, I usually bring an inexpensive tripod that I can leave behind if necessary.) Resting the camcorder on a solid object, such as a railing, is another popular technique.

You can use a 1/4-20 bolt, washer and a piece of cord to make an improvised steadying device. Use the bolt and washer to attach one end of the cord to the camcorder's tripod socket. Then, step firmly on one end of the string as you lift up on the camcorder. You'll be surprised at how well this simple steadying method works.

When hand holding without a steady-

ing aid, lean against a wall or brace your elbows on a table or railing. When standing, try the Kai Chi stance—knees bent, feet about 18 inches apart, toes pointed slightly inward and elbows in.

A FEW SPECIAL TIPS

The following tips will make your top-side videomaking easier and will lead to better video movies:

1. When using manual focus, focus with the lens set for telephoto, then zoom back to the desired image size. The lens will now be at optimum focus at any set-

(elbows, knees, etc.) when you frame them in medium shots. Cutting between joints—such as between elbows and shoulders—appears more natural.

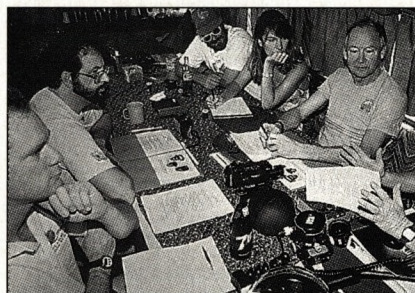
8. Give subjects headroom, looking space and walking space. Put some space between the top of the subject's head and the top of the picture. If the subject is looking at something out of the picture, put more space in front of the subject's face than behind the head. If the subject is walking, put more space in front of the subject than behind.

9. To pan smoothly, move the cam-

order slowly. Aim the camcorder at the point at which you wish to end the pan. Then, turning from the waist, "wind up" your upper body to the point where you wish to begin the pan. During the pan, let your body "unwind." The result will be a smooth pan.

10. Save zooming for special shots, otherwise, it will lose its effect. In most cases, it's best to stop the camera, change image size and camera angle and then start shooting again.

11. Go for the action! Don't shoot long, boring scenes just to fill tape; if it's



Special lighting considerations come in to play when shooting indoor (above) and outside in bright sunlight (below).



ting, from telephoto to wide-angle.

2. To blur the background, select a high numbered shutter speed, such as 1/500 or 1/1000. This reduces depth of field.

3. To sharpen both the foreground and background, select a low-numbered shutter speed, such as 1/60, use the widest angle possible and manually focus just past the near subject.

4. Automatic white balance works in most situations. However, you can select sunlight white balance for sunlight shooting or the indoor setting for artificial lighting.

5. Start the topside sequences with a wide-angle shot to establish location. Shooting divers boarding a boat, for example, gives viewers a feeling for the overall scene, the weather and introduces some of your cast of characters.

6. When shooting interior shots, use indoor white balance, keep bright windows behind you, turn on overhead lights and use a video light for fill.

7. Don't cut people off at natural joints

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
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boring to shoot, it will be twice as boring to watch.

12. Keep scenes short. Three to seven seconds is usually enough. Three five second scenes, shot end to end, are more interesting to view than one long 15 second scene.

13. Change camera angle, image size or both each time you shoot a new scene, however long or short.

CONCLUSIONS

Topside video can be harder than underwater video. You must protect your camcorder from sun, salt spray and dust. Holding the camcorder steady is often harder. While you may have larger movements underwater, smaller movements (shaking hands, trembling fingers) are reduced by water resistance on the outer housing surfaces. One last tip: Place an inexpensive UV or skylight filter over your camcorder lens. The filter acts as a shield against dust, dirt and fingerprints. 

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Ollie Ferguson, vice president of Dive Operations at UNEXSO, says, "Safety is, of course, our number one concern. We want participants in SharkLab to gain a better understanding and appreciation of these magnificent creatures. This carefully designed, multi-day diving and educational program gives participants the chance to handfeed the sharks at Shark Junction in a controlled environment."

A graduate of SharkLab becomes a member of UNEXSO's Shark Team and will be presented with a course certificate, photo and video of the shark feeding experience.

For more information on UNEXSO or SharkLab, contact UNEXSO at (954) 351-9889, (800) 992-DIVE or fax (954) 351-9740; e-mail 102006.3215@compuserve.com. 

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BERNIE CAMPOLI RECOGNIZED FOR PROFESSIONAL EXCELLENCE

Bernie Campoli, a long-time member of the Fraternal Order UDT-SEAL Association and charter member of the Northwest Florida Chapter, received special recognition for distinguished professional service at an awards ceremony held last year.

Bernie is a long-time employee of (Naval) Coastal System Station (CSS), Panama City, FL, where he serves as key support photographer in many test and evaluation projects and exercises. He was commended for underwater cinema and photographic support for the SDV and Dry Deck Shelter Programs. Bernie has logged more dives than he can remember in support of those and other Naval Special Warfare (NSW) programs. He has conducted more than 70 submarine lockouts supporting NSW submersible operations.

Bernie was also awarded a Twenty-five Year Federal Service Pin. In 1963 he came to Panama City as a U.S. Navy photographer/diver to take part in the testing of the MK VI UBA. In 1964 he became a plank owner of special project Sealab. He went on to Bermuda to dive on and shoot the Navy's first man-in-the-sea film (Sealab I). In 1974, after earning a bachelor of arts degree in photography from Brooks Institute, Bernie returned to Panama City as a civilian employee in the CSS photo lab. In addition to his work at CSS, Bernie has also shot underwater photography for the State of Florida on a Manatee program and for the Smithsonian Institution on a coral reef project.

NASE NITROX SAFEAIR PROGRAMS

NASE now has Nitrox SafeAir Programs. The programs went online last October 10. Those who dive between 30 and 130 feet will benefit from Nitrox SafeAir the most.

Gene Broome has been appointed NASE's nitrox and technical training director. He brings many years of experience in the dive industry with him. He has implemented programs in the use of SafeAir, EAN service technician, gas blending and instructor programs.

For more information on the Nitrox SafeAir Programs please contact Gene Broome at (800) 819-4042 or fax (904) 935-3252. Mail inquiries may be directed to NASE Nitrox Technical Training Director, P.O. Box 822, Branford, Florida 32008.

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An Elusive Fish School Leads a Photographer into the Deadly Depths of Narcosis!

Having dived Ras Muhammad's Shark Reef while visiting the Red Sea the first time, I knew what to expect the second time. My dive log from the first dive compared the colors and variety of the reef to a carnival, with abundant sealife and vast schools of Barracuda and snappers in the water column. Schooling fish constantly circle this pinnacle, which rises from the ocean floor some 2,400 feet below. I knew I would have only one chance to dive this site and was determined to get some good images. I was as ready as I could possibly be when the dinghy dropped us at the perfect point to descend directly on top of the best part of the reef.

But this time the wall didn't seem as colorful. The soft corals were deflated and dull and the visibility was only 50 feet. Colorful pictures of the wall would be difficult at best.

Descending to around 70 feet, I saw a school of snappers out away from the wall and below me. I swam beyond sight of the pinnacle and descended into the blue to get a shot from below. As I swam, the snappers started to descend. I finally got below them and they leveled out, or so I thought. I had shot a few frames when a school of Barracuda started to circle above with the sun in the center of the living ring. Firing away—Barracuda to my left, snappers to my right—I was getting shots I had previously only dreamed of getting!

Suddenly, I started feeling dizzy. My dive buddy, Jo, was far above. I could feel my whole body start to pulsate. I realized things were seriously wrong. I looked at my depth gauge and panic began to set in as I realized how deep I was—190 feet! I was so overcome with nitrogen narcosis I could hardly react. Movement became difficult but somehow I managed to overcome my darkening mind and the increasing vertigo to get hold of the power inflator on my BC. I sensed I was very close to blacking out. My panicked mind told me this could be

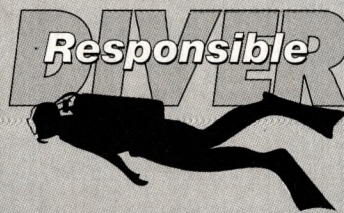
BY MIKE HURLEY

The Code of the Responsible Diver

*As a Responsible Diver,
I understand and assume the
risks I may encounter
while diving.*

Responsible Diving begins with:

- Diving within the limits of my ability and training.
- Evaluating the conditions before every dive and making sure they fit my personal capabilities.
- Being familiar with and checking my equipment before and during every dive.
- Knowing my buddy's ability level as well as my own.
- Accepting the responsibility for my own safety on every dive.



the end. The pressure at this depth had long since overcome my neutral buoyancy and I was sinking fast.

A long blast on the inflator and I ascended to my buddy at 70 feet in what seemed like seconds. I rationalized, in my extremely frightened, yet calm, state of mind, that I'd rather be bent than lost to the depths. I was breathing very heavily—my body was pulsating, pounding. I thought to myself, relax, breathe, relax. After some time at the shallower depth, my breathing slowed and my head started to clear. When I finally checked all the statistics on my dive computer, I found that total bottom time at this point was seven minutes.

We continued the dive at around 40 feet with no problems. As we swam around a corner, there was another school of snappers, larger in number and with much larger individuals. I swam in for some shots and, within a few minutes, from behind us, the schooling Barracuda also arrived.

Having been lucky enough to survive, the education I got was critical. I'll sum it up so you don't have to suffer the same hard-earned lessons.

No image is worth dying for, so pay attention to your depth gauge and air. Don't let the excitement of the moment keep you so focused you don't know how deep you are. This is especially important when diving in blue water. When you have no frame of reference it's easy to go deeper than you intend.

Even if you think the only way to get a shot is to venture into dangerously deep water, it's probably not. In this case, if I would have just kept swimming at a safe depth I would have been able to get the same images in just 60 feet of water.


It's hard to imagine but I can assure you that at such depths you lose control of your movements; some lose control of their thinking. If you must do deep dives, take special classes to prepare for them, plan each dive carefully and don't deviate from that plan. 🐟

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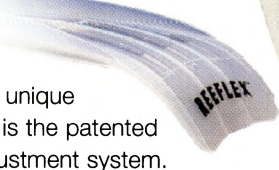
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